He makes sacrifices on
important occasions, especially for rain and for victory in war, and it is his duty to provide cattle for the sacred herds of Nyikang at Nyilual and Wau and a canoe for Nyikang's shrine at Nyibodho. Nyikang, the culture hero of the Shilluk, their first king, and the creator of their nation, is immanent in him and this makes him the double pivot of Shilluk society, the political head of the nation and the centre of the national cult. The kingship is the common symbol of the Shilluk people and, Nyikang being immortal, an abiding institution which binds past and present and future generations.

The correspondence of political structure with religious cult can be seen at every point of the structure. The territorial segments of the nation and their association with lineages is, as we have noted, validated by the myth of Nyikang's parcelling out of his conquests among the clans, the strands of which are, moreover, caught up into a single mythological point, Nyikang. Some trace their descent from his companions, some from his collateral relatives, others from the original inhabitants of the country conquered by him, and yet others from men who played some part in his saga. The lineage heads who are the chiefs of settlements have ritual duties to the kingship: in

i.e., the King - Analysis 17

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Chapter III

SHILLUK (Contd.); OTHER SHILLUK-SPEAKING TRIBES

Religion

T11 T16 There are present three important and clearly defined elements in the religion of the Shilluk, viz. :—

1. The recognition and somewhat limited worship of a god, Juok.
2. The cult of Nyakang and the dead kings of the Shilluk (ultimately reducible to the cult of Nyakang, since he is incarnate in every king).
3. The cult of ancestor spirits other than that of Nyakang.

We shall discuss these in the above order, but must first point out that besides these outstanding features of his religion the Shilluk believes in various more or less anthropomorphic but non-human beings dwelling in bush and river, the most important of these being the river-people, with whom are associated lords of supernatural river-cattle.

T11 T16 The word *juok*, or some dialectical modification, occurs in all the Nilotic languages as well as in some others, e.g. Lotuko. It always connotes something in the nature of god, spirit, or ghost, but its psychical meaning in one language may be quite different from that in a neighbouring tongue, while identical meanings in two languages may have very different values since a particular connotation of the word common to two peoples may refer either to an important or to an entirely subsidiary element in their religious beliefs.[1]

T16 T12 Juok is formless and invisible, and, like the air, is everywhere at once. He is far above Nyakang (in whose cult the Shilluk religion centres) and men alike; nevertheless it is principally through Nyakang that men approach him, performing the sacrifices to Nyakang which cause him to move Juok to send rain. There are, however, prayers to Juok, and the word Juok occurs in many greetings, e.g. *Yiwiri*

[1] These points may be summarily illustrated by comparing Shilluk, Dinka, and Acholi. In Shilluk, Juok though associated with the firmament is, apart from Nyakang, of comparatively little practical importance in daily life; in the Dinka pit are the mighty dead, appealed to on almost every occasion of difficulty or danger, while among both Shilluk and Acholi there are certain spirits of the bush known as *Jok* (or *Ajok*), greatly feared among the Acholi, see little regarded by the Shilluk. For an excellent discussion of the significance of the word *Juok* see Hofmayr, *op. cit.*, 163-208.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Juok, "May Juok guard you," while a sick man may cry, *Er ra Juok*, "Why, oh Juok!"; but on the whole, Juok is so linked with Nyakang in the Shilluk mind that he is seldom approached in prayer without the mention of Nyakang (and sometimes of his son Dag). Indeed so obvious is this association that the Rev. D. S. Oyler writes: "They never pray to God without invoking an intercessor,"[1] and gives the following prayer as an example:—

"We praise you, you who are God. Protect us, we are in your hands and yourself us, save me. You and Nikwong you are the ones who created, people are in your hands, and it is you Nikwong, who are accustomed to assist God to save, and it is you who give the rain. The sun is yours, and the river is yours, you who are Nikwong. You came from under the sun, you and your father, you two saved the earth, and your son Dok, you subdued all the peoples. The cow (for sacrifice) is here for you, and the blood will go to God and you . . ."[2]

We do not know of any definite evidence of sacrifice to Juok only; even in the all-important sacrifice for rain Nyakang is also invoked. Juok, vaguely associated with the firmament, is recognized as the creator, though now showing but little interest in his creatures. The prayers offered directly to him, collected by Hofmayr, are such dance songs as the following (we have paraphrased Hofmayr's literal translations):—

"I pray to God (Juok), God the Giver (Juokwong), God the Protector (Juokagiri); I have taken [God] to me and have become fearful to my enemies so that they scarcely dare attack me." "The Shilluk when enlisted cluster like crows, they forget Juok; the Shilluk full of lust forget Juok." And a song composed by King Yor: "I pray to Juok alone for he dwells the space, space thereon are of Juok."[3]

Two subsidiary uses of the word Juok may be mentioned. There is an expression *pun Juok*, "the country of Juok". We formed the opinion that though this implied no local habitation it was vaguely associated with the dead; Hofmayr is more definite, regarding *pun Juok* as the place of Nyakang and the ancestors, to be reached after many months journeying in the bush. Certain diseases may in a general way be described as Juok (though each has its own name), this term also being applied to folk-tales to men possessing supernormal attributes. Summing up, we may say that Juok is the Creator, perhaps vaguely associated with the firmament, but certainly having

[1] "Nilamagi's Place in the Shilluk Religion": *J.R.A.I.*, (1908), 283.
[2] Loc. cit.
[3] Op. cit., 290-291.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

778 346 gourds, seven articles described as plates—white and red, two very large—seven similar but smaller articles, copper cooking vessels, many Shilluk clay pots, and four elephant tusks; sacred water is also kept here. This is the hut which Nyakang himself is thought to visit at [714] night, arriving as a wind; music heard coming from the hut as he plays his lyre (*akow*) is taken as evidence of his presence, and the feeling that he still protects his people is vastly strengthened by these visits. This hut was said to be built by the chief of the Nyalwal sub-district in which is Fenikang.

Wed Mac contains the cooking pots of Nyakang, and here fire is made and food cooked.

Dag, or Kwayo, represents the hut in which Dag slept.

Duwol—also called Nyakang—was the hut before which Nyakang [642] heard disputes, and the *reth* still sits in front of it and hears cases when he visits Fenikang. Mr. Heurtz was told that the small children of the village might sleep in this hut when mosquitoes were bad, and at Fenikang it was said that four tusks were kept here.

The *kadi* is stated to be a place for the king, where he may urinate and perhaps bathe.

● 782 796 The worship of Nyakang at Fenikang and his other shrines consists of a solemn ritual of sacrifice and prayer. We know of the following occasions for ceremonial worship; no doubt there are others of which we did not hear, and we do not doubt that sacrifice would be made in any threat of national danger or disaster. We give in brief outline accounts of the two most important annual ceremonies:—

[808] 1. The rain-making ceremony held before the rains at the beginning of the month *alaber*, at the new moon (the Shilluk calendar is lunar).

2. The harvest festival held when the millet is cut, i.e. about the end of the rains.

At the rain ceremony a cow and a bullock are given to Nyakang, the latter being killed and the former added to the herd belonging [643] to the shrine. Both should be given by the king, who at the Fashoda shrine himself takes part in the ceremony. The bullock is slain with a sacred spear by one of the *kawak* before the door of the shrine enclosure, while the king stands near the beast praying loudly to Nyakang for rain and holding a spear pointing upwards. After the meat has been eaten by all the *kawak*, the bones and as much blood as can be collected in a gourd are thrown into the river, and the skin is made into a mat for Nyakang. Much of the millet preserved in

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

• 782
796 the shrine since the beginning of the last harvest is made into beer for
this occasion. Our Fenikang informants told us that the king should
[648] himself come to their village for this rite, and the above short descrip-
tion is mainly from notes made at Fenikang. But, whatever the
theory, the usual practice at the present day is for the king to send the
animals given to Nyakang to the shrines, and for the *kwareh* to
pray for rain as they are sacrificed.

[118] We are indebted to Yangjok, one of the most important
of the Shilluk chiefs, for the following account of the rain
ceremony as it is held at Accop, where stands one of the *kwaro*
Nyakang. A bullock, or bull, and a hen are killed before the
[719] shrine of Nyakang, each animal being killed by one of the *kwareh*
Nyakang. Before the ceremony the ground within the shrine
enclosure and that outside the fence is swept clean by a number of
old women. Drums are placed in the open space near the centre
of the village and men and women dance vigorously, first holding
spears and other weapons, then raising their hands, singing and praising
Nyakang. If there is a tree in the open space the sacrificial bullock
is tied to it. At the end of the dance the chief of the district pours
water, recently brought from the river, into the hollow of his hand,
spits into it, and sprinkles the bullock with this. The bullock is
[787] speared high up in the flank, so that the wound is not immediately
fatal, and is allowed to go free. If he wanders towards the river it is
a good sign, and if he falls on his left side, or goes towards the shrine
of Nyakang, it is good, but if he falls on his right side it is bad; in
theory the bullock should go to the river and come back to die where
he was speared, and it seemed that in practice little difficulty was
experienced by the practised Shilluk herdsmen in guiding the victim
in the right direction. The beast is skinned and cut up where it
[831] falls, and the flesh is boiled and eaten by all except pregnant women
and their husbands and men and women who have had intercourse
during the previous night. Care is taken not to break the bones,
which with all fragments are thrown into the river. The head, one
forelimb, and the bowels compose the share of the attendants of
the shrine, who cook and eat their portions with the rest of the com-
munity. The skin is prepared and used as a mat in the hut of Nyakang,
where the sacred spear is kept with which the sacrificial animals are
killed.

At the harvest festival it is usual to bring ears of ripening millet
and to thrust them into the thatch of certain of the huts constituting

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
F323 Shilluk F323

782 796 the shrine. When the millet is cut everyone brings a portion to the *kwenk Nyakang*. This is ground and made into porridge with water brought from the river; some is poured out at the threshold of the hut regarded as specially sacred to Nyakang, and some on the ground within the hut, the outside of which is also anointed with the mixture. Until this has been done no one may eat of the new crop.

643 782 There is a ceremony at the accession of each king, when the newly consecrated ruler should send cattle to each shrine of Nyakang, and also presents of spears and other valuable objects, such as ostrich eggs and elephant tusks. Some of the beasts are sacrificed outside the enclosure, others are added to the herd belonging to the shrine. We have no information concerning the details of this ceremony, but we do not doubt that the flesh of the slaughtered beasts is eaten by the *kwenk*.

785 782 When a man is sick he may bring or send a sheep to the nearest shrine of Nyakang, where the attendants sprinkle it with water and spear it. They pray for the sick man, who eats a part of the flesh of the sheep or drinks some of the water in which the meat has been boiled. The rest of the sheep is eaten by the guardians of the shrine and their friends without any ceremony, but the bones and perhaps the intestines are thrown into the river.

782 796 We add an account of a ceremony that took place on 9th December, 1911, at which we were present, premising that our notes were made after, not during, the ceremony and are certainly incomplete:—

[794] When we reached Fenikang at the end of November, 1911, the shrine of Nyakang was being prepared for a ceremony, having for its object the saving of the millet from attacks by flocks of innumerable small birds. A band of women, perhaps as many as forty, had started to clear the area round the shrine, pulling up every weed and blade of grass. Often they would sing, keeping time by clapping their hands; or they would get up and dance slowly round the outside fence of the shrine, and then sitting down would chant another song, occasionally breaking out into cries resembling the Arab *yaleleh*.

[579] Some of the women were visitors to Fenikang; unfortunately we did not discover whether they had come specially for this purpose, or to which clans they belonged. For the next few days there were always a few women at work weeding, plastering mud, painting the walls, and generally tidying the shrine, or bringing in baskets of mud from outside for the fence of the enclosure.

Although the time was undoubtedly due for the ceremony to

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
F323 Shilluk F323

performance was delayed, the difficulty being the provision of a bull for the sacrifice. It was the duty of the district chief, Dimjok of the Gokdeng clan, to provide the sacrifice, but as a certain man from the village of Buru owed him a bull he was endeavouring to obtain this and to kill it for the ceremony instead of taking one from his own herd. How long negotiations might have continued it is impossible to say, for Dimjok, though a chief, was old and feeble and seemed to have little authority in his district. After about a fortnight we announced our intention of leaving, but Aker begged us to remain, and expressed great regret that we should go before the ceremony. We naturally supposed this present to be formal, and that the village was merely waiting for us to leave in order to perform the sacrifice; however we went with her to the village of Nyelwal where the chief and his assistant and a few old men were assembled. Here Aker harangued the men, frequently making marks on the ground and breaking off pieces of grass and laying them down one by one by way of emphasis and explanation. The conference lasted a long time and she begged us to leave patience, seeming certain that she must gain her way. We cannot say how far she went into the matter of the debt from Buru, or if at any time she had any official voice in the affair, but she undoubtedly had the authority of the king behind her and she used it freely. Towards the end of the conference the men's tones had changed completely. Aker announced to us that the ceremony would take place the next day and that Dimjok would provide the bull.

At dawn next morning the drums were beaten for about half an hour. At 8 a.m. there were no signs of festivity in the village, and women, including Aker's servants, were still at work on the shrine enclosure, smoothing and plastering and removing the smallest weeds. Yet by 2 p.m. probably more than 500 people had assembled and dancing had begun. In the centre of the open space to the west of the shrine a large and a small drum were being beaten, the dancers surging in spirals round and away from these. Numbers of older men and women were sitting near the huts on the edge of the dancing-ground, and hundreds of spears were ranged against the thatches, for though all the men came to the village carrying their spears no one held one during the ceremony except Aker, who carried in her left hand a narrow pointed spear, in her right a whip with a double lash, and wore round her head a fringe of black goat-hair. Her cloth was knotted over the left shoulder in exactly masculine style. She

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

782 783 786 danced alone inside the enclosure of the shrine, and occasionally came out and danced round outside it, her movements resembling those of the men rather than the women dancers. Tune and rhythm were frequently changed, and it was obvious that the figures were traditional. A number of young men wore leopard and other skins suspended from the waist and hanging behind, almost all had decorated anklets and armlets of different kinds, belts of disc beads were worn round the waist, and plumes suspended from the forearms. Headdresses varied a good deal; the characteristic "Tam o' Shanter", which we remembered as the dominant fashion for young warriors ten years earlier, was only worn by a few, the more popular style apparently being a flat, circular mass of felted hair on either side of the head; a great number had the head shaved and wore a wig or crown of sheep's wool. They carried millet or flowery grass stalks, some had clubs and parrying shields, and the ceremonial bow-derivative covered with strips of metal, called *dang*. Groups of children, decked in whatever finery they could get, took part in the dance, solemnly imitating their elders. The women, who danced in separate contingents, all carried hippo-hide whips, and, more frequently than the men, they left the large dancing-ground and passed in procession round the outside of the shrine enclosure. Whenever the drum ceased the dancing stopped immediately, and the clear note of a kudu horn trumpet could be heard.

[293]

After the dancing had continued for some hours Aker was noticed waiting in the *kuli* with a number of men—we believe there were eight—all carrying spears. These were the spears of Nyakang, which had just been brought forth from the hut Kwayo; one large spearhead was covered by a sheath. A bull was led across the dancing-ground and then released, when it sauntered into the shrine enclosure and wandered about unmolested. Aker, carrying her spear, danced within the enclosure, and then left it, and stepping high, danced round the drum, while the men went alone to the khor to wash the spears. The bull was now caught and held outside the entrance to the shrine. Almost before we realized that anything was happening—very quickly, yet without any apparent hurry or confusion—all the guests departed, and the dancing ground was all but deserted; besides Aker and a small group of chiefs and elders, only members of the Golobogu and Pamiri clans remained in the vicinity of the shrine. These men now sat in a row while Aker and Ayurial stood beside the bull, which was held on each side by ropes, a man grasping its tail. One by one

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the men rose and each made a short speech, to which Aker answered; these speeches were appeals to Nyakang not to let the millet suffer from the ravages of the birds. When all had spoken, Awejok, brother's son to Ayurial, stroked the bull's flank with a spear and then thrust it into the beast. Immediately he ran with the spear to the khor to wash it. The wound was oblique and only a few inches deep. The bull was now guided into the enclosure of the shrine, where it was stabbed again with another spear and led into the enclosure of Kwayo while Aker and the chiefs remained just outside. The groans of the dying bull were heard for some time. The chiefs now followed into the courtyard of Kwayo but we do not know whether any of them entered the hut. The flesh of the sacrifice was divided and eaten subsequently by Aker and the men of Golobogu and Pameiti. A band of warriors in full dress bearing their spears now returned to the dancing-ground, danced once round the sacred enclosure, then knelt down and clapped their hands and went silently away. We were told that the spear used to kill the bull was one presented specially by the king; had one of the original spears of Nyakang been used no one could have eaten the flesh of the bull and survived.

It must be noted that before the ceremony we were told that Ayurial was the hereditary bull slayer, but his paternal nephew certainly thrust the first spear; we did not ascertain whether he or Ayurial finally killed and cut up the beast. Probably the matter was of little consequence, as Ayurial was old and Awejok would succeed him. Before the ceremony we were also told that the beast would be stabbed outside the fence but would enter the shrine before dying, and this was so. The sacred character of the spears was a matter of importance; the large spear referred to above was kept sheathed throughout the ceremony until used to stab the bull, thus emphasizing its sacred quality.

So much for what we saw. We were told that the spear would be washed in the holy water kept in the hut Kwayo and that after this it would be taken to the river to be washed. The right forelimb of the bull would be cut off and shown round the village—we believe that this went to Ayuriel—the rest of the beast was Nyakang's and would be taken to Aker's home, there to be eaten by the old men.

Our description of the worship of Nyakang may conclude with a short account of his appearance in animal form, as well as some reference to the cult of his mother Nikaiya, almost as much crocodile

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

victim into a crocodile to be a spouse to one of her crocodile relatives. Yet Nikaiya brings luck to those whom she visits by night to ask for fire; if a barren woman bears a child after such a visit it will be called Nikaiya, and the father will kill a sheep and throw it into the river. Nikaiya is known by her short stout figure and great muscular development, and by the fact that she "eats" (mouths) her words. That the river is the true home of Nikaiya is shown by the manner of sacrificing to her; for as a sacrifice would be made at the shrine of Nyakang, or at the grave shrine of any Shilluk king, if Nyakang or one of the kings had appeared in a dream—or if a king had "possessed" a man causing him to become ill—so when Nikaiya becomes immanent sacrifice is made by throwing a live sheep, with its legs bound, into the river.

Hofmayr states that the *kwoth* may divine that a new-born infant has been sent by Nikaiya; if a boy it will then be called Nikaiya, if a girl Nikaiya.[1] When such a child grows up and becomes betrothed an offering must be made to Nikaiya as part of the wedding ceremony. The couple go to the river, where the *kwoth* slaughters a male black and white sheep, smears the young people with the contents of the stomach, and fastens the ear-lobes with beads on to the feet of the bride. Beer, tobacco, earth, and parts of the sacrifice are thrown into the river for Nikaiya, and the betrothed bathe in the river. They are then conducted by the *kwoth* to a house prepared for them in the bride's village, and must remain there for three or four days.[2]

There is a limited cult of the Dinka god, Dengdit, perhaps confined to the southern part of the country. Fig. 2 of Pl. IX represents a shrine to Dengdit in Odong hamlet, not far from Fenikang, and we both saw and heard of other instances. The example figured is, as far as we could determine, unlike any Shilluk shrine and was said to be of Dinka pattern. The present incumbent took over the shrine at the death of his grandmother, a Dinka woman, who had been possessed by Dengdit to whom she erected the shrine. The iron bracelets shown in the photograph have all been brought by Shilluk, who visit the shrine in considerable numbers. No doubt the possession of the present incumbent resembles the Shilluk possession by their *ror* (kings).

We should also mention the spirits of the bush and river, i.e. creatures resembling mankind in form but with non-human functions

[1] Op. cit., 277. [2] Hofmayr, op. cit., 291.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
F323 Shilluk F323

776 and habitat. The spirits of the bush are we believe in the main unimportant, but the river people and their river cattle play a more
776 considerable part in the mythology of the people. One of the groups
773 of people whom Nyakang found in the land were fish-men, or river-men with the power of turning into fish, while the mysterious cows whose dung provided the "ashes of denying" (p. 102) had their original home in the river.

643 It is convenient to consider the cult of the dead Shilluk kings apart
769 from that of Nyakang at his cenotaph shrines, but it must be
776 remembered that in every king there is immanent the spirit of Nyakang, so that the worship rendered them at their grave shrines is ultimately only part of the cult of Nyakang.

778 Like the cenotaph shrines of Nyakang the royal grave shrines are
764 called *kwogo*, as opposed to the graves of commoners for which the
643 word is *rwoc*.[1] Though smaller, they resemble the shrines of Nyakang in appearance, for the roofs of their enclosures have terminals in
[340] ostrich egg and spear-head. The guardians or priests (*kwoth*) of
[793] these shrines are of the same class as those of the *kwogo Nyakang*, viz. elderly women, often widows of the dead king, and old men, his former servants, or their descendants who have reached the requisite age, or, as a last resource when none of these can be found, old women or old men not specially connected with the dead king. Just as no one except the *kwoth Nyakang* is allowed to enter the shrines of Nyakang, so no stranger may enter the royal grave shrines.

[649] A royal daughter never becomes a guardian of a shrine, but she may enter the grave shrine of her dead father and rub her hands on its floor for a blessing whenever she likes, as may the royal sisters. It seemed that these privileges did not extend to the shrines of other dead kings, nor even to the enclosed space around them. Should the

[787] spirit of a dead king appear to a royal daughter or sister in a dream and demand an offering, she would take a sheep to the guardians of the tomb and give it to one of them to sacrifice in the same way as a commoner. There are cattle belonging to the grave shrines of

• [782] the kings, and offerings are made as at the shrines of Nyakang. Thus, when the millet crop threatens to fail, or epidemic sickness to attack the cattle, Nyakang or one of his successors will appear to someone in a dream and demand a sacrifice. This is told to the king, who will immediately send a cow and a bullock to one or more of the shrines

[798 643] [1] So kings do not "die", but "go away", and in addressing the king a special court language is employed.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
F323 Shilluk F323

who was so distressed by the stench from his companion's body that he shouted to the people outside the hut commanding them on no account to leave his successor to die slowly in such a manner.

For a long time no public announcement of the king's death is made, but the news spreads gradually.

We could not discover by whom and under what circumstances the king's body was brought to his birthplace, where he would be buried and his grave shrine erected. It must, however, be remembered that Fashoda has not always been the home of the king, for although it is uncertain how the change was brought about, there is no doubt that formerly each Shilluk king reigned and was buried in the village in which he was born and in which his afterbirth was buried. Some months after death, when decomposition was judged to have proceeded so far that little but the bones would be found, the hut was broken down by the sons, a grave was dug, and the bones of the king and of his companion were placed in it wrapped in the skin of one of the sacrificed oxen. A hut was built over the grave, and one or two others put up within the enclosure for the attendants on the new shrine which had thus arisen. Westermann states that this ceremony was the public notification that the king had disappeared, and he describes the sacrifice of a man and woman by drowning; the victims were bound and placed in a canoe, which with many spears, bells, beads, and pottery vessels was towed into the middle of the river and sunk.[1]

The following account of the election and consecration to the kingship of the chosen prince is a summary composed from the accounts given by Seligman, Moore, and Hofmayr.[2] It does not pretend to be exhaustive, and where apparent discrepancies occur in the sources we have generally made use of unpublished information collected in 1911, or incorporated the details we consider most likely to be accurate.

The interregnum after the king's death usually lasts about a year, a period of anxiety and uncertainty but which ceremonially should be long enough to permit of the sowing and considerable growth of the next season's millet crop, perhaps even of its harvesting. During

[1] Op. cit., 178.

[2] Seligman, "Cult of Nyakang, and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk": *Fourth Report of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories*, vol. A, Khartoum, 1911; P. Moore, "Installation of the Fan. Chief (King of the Shilluk)": *S.N. & R.*, 1, 1918, 140-52; Hofmayr, op. cit., 140-50. Moore was an eye-witness of the first part of the installation of the present king, Fadiet, on 17th January, 1918. Westermann has a note dealing with the installation of the king, but this is extremely short and incomplete.

2 Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
F323 Shilluk F323

lovers in the shrine of Nyakang; this old man was crowned with 693
fever, and was so bewildered by the multitude that he usually 796
succumbed.[1] Now, or perhaps at an earlier stage of the ceremony, a girl of about ten is presented to the king-elect by men of *kwa* Obid, a clan traditionally descended from the old inhabitants of the land who became the friends and dependents of Nyakang.[2]

At last the king-elect enters Fashoda, *orore* on either side of him, and is taken to the shrine of Nyakang, in front of which, its legs held by the *orore*, is the sacred four-legged stool brought from Akurwa. Upon this is placed the effigy of Nyakang, presumably held in place by an *orore*; these sacred objects are shielded from the general view by a sheet of cotton cloth held in front and at the sides, the shrine forming a screen behind them. Within the enclosed area are certainly the king-elect, the *ogw kwar*, and the man holding "Nyakang"; whether there are others is uncertain. According to one account the king-elect, wrapped in a cowhide, is laid on the ground on a leopard skin in front of Nyakang; he clasps a drum, and the whole assembly beseeches the spirit of Nyakang to permit and bless the new ruler. The *orore* crouch behind the king, while women, singing and dancing, encircle the recumbent group. Whether these details are accurate or not it is certain that after a short time the statue of Nyakang is withdrawn by the *orore* from the stool, on which the king now rests himself, remaining motionless in prayer and communion with his ancestors for perhaps a quarter of an hour. Meanwhile water is heated in the specially built temporary "homestead"—containing we believe of three huts—into which the king will withdraw when he retires from the shrine of Nyakang, and certain of the king's wives wash his feet with hot and with cold water, in order that he may be neither too "cold" nor too "hot" with his people. A bull provided by the *kwa Ajid* has been led before the door of the king's special

[1] There is obviously more connected in connection with this case than we have indicated, or else there were two known murderers, but details were not easy to elicit. Also informed us that the effigy would be lying underneath when the king stepped over him, wrestling him with his right foot as he did so, for if this were not done the country would sicken and fail. This took place near the shrine of Nyakang, apparently as the king approached the second stool; the "guard room"—including certainly the *jang dwong*—assembled near the shrine and took upon them a kind of parentage, which was then taken by the effigy, who was left exposed, and ran—or perhaps jumped and—would dead, though it was not expected that he would die the same night. It was said that the effigy was not substituted from any special clan or place. [182]

[2] The girl, known as the *ogw kwar*, stands the king-elect during the ceremonies of installation and later is given in marriage—the dues are nearly her himself—according to his wishes. *Kwa* Obid handsomely received a large payment in spears and cattle for providing the girl. Whether she or one close was taken or sold by the king and in any way resembled the *dak kar* of the Ashanti is a matter for future investigation. [649]

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
F323 Shilluk F323

already referred to *pun Juok* (p. 71), the country of the dead, to be reached after long wandering in the bush, but there is also a chthonic element in Shilluk ancestor worship; the spirits persist in or round the grave and may harm its living relatives, e.g. the death of a missionary's wife shortly after that of her husband was attributed to the ghost of the latter, while Hofmayr quotes a remark of the chief Yaugjok to the effect that evil comes on man from below.[1] Again, the Shilluk undoubtedly fear the *ora*, the malevolent element that persists after the death of one who has died in hatred of friends or relatives, though here again the belief does not seem to bulk as largely as among the Acholi.

Offerings and sacrifice may be made to ancestors, but in our limited experience we have met with no instance that could certainly be dissociated from the cult of the royal ancestors or in which the ancestral spirits were not confused with or associated with Juok. It is true that Hofmayr describes offerings to ancestors[2] but his descriptions, taken for the most part from notes of colleagues, are not very convincing, as there is nothing to show that the cult of Nyakang or his descendants was specifically excluded. On the other hand he cites two short chants[3] which may be regarded as evidence of prayer to the ancestors:—

ure kwajo mayagu
"The people entreat their mothers (ancestors)."
ure kwajo ringwu
"The people entreat their people (their dead)."

A hæmorrhage followed by sudden death is called "the spears of the dead", i.e. the victim has been stabbed by a ghostly weapon, but the Shilluk expression, *nang niang pa Juok*, seems to bring Juok into the matter. A more definite relation to ancestral spirits is seen in a note by Banholzer, quoted by Hofmayr,[4] to the effect that warriors obtained the services of an *ajuago* to invoke their ancestors, that the spirits of the slain may be harmless. A sheep is killed and part of the viscera placed in a pot and buried as an offering to those in the underworld.[5]

[1] Op. cit., 150. [2] Op. cit., 109. [3] Op. cit., 150. [4] Loc. cit.
[5] Oyler records that many Shilluk "take an offering of the first fruits to the grave of an ancestor, usually the father. . . . The grain is made into a sort of bannock and poured out on the grave. The man then says that he has given his father a meal." ("Hikering's place in the Shilluk Religion", *J.R.A.I.*, i, 1918, 286). But in another passage Oyler clearly shows an association of the ancestral spirits with Juok (for we assume that "God" is a translation of "Juok"): ". . . When prayer is to be offered to the spirit of a dead person, a female sheep is brought to the grave. If the person making the prayer is not the son of the

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
F323 Shilluk F323

Mr. Henry, whom we consulted, holds that there is little difference between the worship of ancestors, and that of former kings. A suppliant would visit a royal shrine if there happened to be one near, and might afterwards resort to the grave of an ancestor. If no royal shrine were near he would immediately resort to an ancestor shrine, breaking away sticks, dirt, etc., with his hands, and offer a prayer to the ancestor. When for sickness a sheep is offered at the grave of an ancestor, an ear is severed, indicating that the sheep belongs to that ancestor and is ever afterwards sacred. Such sacred animals are handed over to some aged attendant of the shrine; their milk is never mixed with the milk of other animals, but is kept for the small children and the very aged, who come to the attendant's house to drink. The animals are never sold, and for each as it goes old one of its offspring is substituted. Such prayer and sacrifice may be offered in any serious difficulty, in sickness, before a perilous journey, or when greatly perplexed in any matter.

Human sacrifice was always rare among the Shilluk, but is undoubtedly occurred. There is a legend, likely we think to be truthful, that the shrine at Fenikang was originally credited with human sacrifice, and the idea exists that each time this shrine is rebuilt someone will die. We have already referred to the ceremonial and fatal trending underfoot of an old man (p. 91), by the king-elect and the people, and to the ceremonial drowning of a man and woman (p. 92). But besides these ceremonies more or less secret sacrifices might take place as a last resort to obtain rain—the usual prayers and offerings having failed—and for success in war. According to Hofmayr, who gives texts with literal translations,

> deceased, the right ear is cut from the sheep, and tied to the ankle of the person making the offering, and the wounded ear is washed in a gourd of water . . . and then the water is poured on the grave, and part of it is thrown in the eye of the ear. . . . It is for God . . . The prayer is offered before the ear is cut off. If the ear offers, prayer is made to God and the deceased, and then the sheep is killed as usual as . . . [the sheep screams]. The sheep is cut open, and the contents of the stomach and bowels are thrown on the house of the sufferer, and then the ears is washed. The same cannot be tasted until the eldest living wife of the deceased takes some of the soup in a small gourd, which is covered with a small native mat, and pours it on the grave. . . .
>
> "While there is no set form for the prayer . . . yet they are all very similar, and the following is an example:—
>
> "We praise you, you, who are God, it was you, who gave me my father, who begot me. I pray to you also my father. Why did you go to the earth and keep silence? Was not this your house before? When will return to your house, why do you not pray to God? Your house is given as a plaything to the people. You went to the presence of God, and we thought that nothing evil would befall us again, after you left. Have help, God. Why do you leave the responsibility of saving on God alone? God's spirit becomes tired (from work), and he leaves people and they die. Why do you not see and save us? You were on the ground, and you have forgotten that a person from another house does not guard yours." (Op. cit., 284-5.)

I:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
F323 Shilluk : F323

the king would generally be privy to the matter—always, it may be presumed, where rain was concerned—the actual killing being done by an *ajwogo*; special virtue resides in the bones, and these, perhaps with other parts of the body, were buried in the track to water, *i.e.* to the river.[1] The procedure was the same, whether for rain or war.

The "medicine-men" of the Shilluk are of two kinds, the *ajwogo* —literally "the man of Juok" (God)—the good medicine-man, who generally speaking works for the good of the community (though from the administrative standpoint his acts may be reprehensible), including the cure of the sick, and the evil medicine-man, the *jalyao*—literally "the man of herbs"—dealing essentially in black magic, or the satisfaction of private rather than public ends.

Typically, though not always, the *jalyao* is a monorchid, though men with double undescended testes or even unusually small glands tend to be regarded as such. The malignity attending this condition is so fully recognized that all such should be killed at birth; this can only be done by drowning, the victim being enclosed within a specially woven basket without which—such is its power—the infant would surely survive. A common practice of the *jalyao* is to work on parts of the body (hair, excreta, etc.) of the person to be injured, and the process is extended to include objects associated with the individual, e.g. a petticoat, or even a weapon (especially a club); or an effigy may be made, and hexed or pierced to destroy the person it represents.

Certain women known as *daiyao*—recognized by their silence, especially do they speak enviously of others—are regarded as the feminine equivalents of the *jalyao*. The magic of the *daiyao* is associated with her belly; one mode of working evil is to urinate into a gourd and place this in the house of her victim. A *daiyao* has no difficulty in getting married, nor does she bring misfortune on her husband.

We are in doubt as to how far the evil eye (*yuep*) is associated with the *jalyao*, though it is certain that not all having the evil eye are monorchids or even of the male sex. The power of the evil eye —largely, though not necessarily, hereditary—is perhaps the other most common cause of illness and is met by sympathetic magic:—

> "When a medicine man undertakes to cure a case of the evil eye, he aims to . . . cure the person suffering, and . . . to put that particular charmer . . . out of business. A sheep is brought, and the medicine man hews a nail and-a-half. With the nail he blinds the sheep. He then tells the patient that he

[1] Op. cit., 154-6.

3:Westermann E-6 (1910) 1912 F223 Shilluk F223

with rather long legs, a slender body, and large horns. The horns, while young, are dressed into most manifold strange forms, this being the business of a particular craftsman, the "dresser of horns". Sometimes in a large herd one sees hardly any cattle with the horns in their natural shape. An illustration of how cattle are cherished and shown regarded as personal beings is the fact that they have about 40 different names for cattle, according to their colour, the configuration or size of the horns, etc. Vide page 107. — Domestic animals are not butchered, except when sick or exceedingly old. Oxen and goats are killed on festal occasions, such as funeral or marriage meals, or as sacrifices to Nyikang and Juok. Neither do they sell cattle; for a stranger it is practically impossible to purchase a cow or an ox. The price of a cow is about £ 3; an ox is half the value of a cow which has calved; a young heifer has double the value of a cow. — Slaying a cow is done by stabbing it with a spear in the nape, so that the aorta is pierced. The blood is collected and cooked as food.

The cows are milked morning and evening, usually by boys, sometimes also by old men, but not by women, the latter having nothing to do with cattle. The quantity of milk obtained is but poor. A gourd is the usual milk vessel. These are washed with cow urine, which gives the milk an unpleasant flavour. They also wash their hands in cow-urine; but they do not mix the milk with it, as is the custom with Dinkas and Nuers.

Each village possesses a common cow-shed, but into it the herd is put at night during the rainy season only, when the mosquitoes are very bad. The rest of the year they are kraaled in the open yard, where they are tied with ropes to short pegs driven into the ground. This cattle-court is a semi-circular enclosure; at the entrance to it there is a small circular place built of cow-stalks and covered with straw, in which the young men who watch the herd sleep. A fire of dried cow-dung is kept smouldering all night in this place. Sick cattle are penned in the cow-shed during the daytime, to keep them out of the sun and away from food, but not in the night, unless it is the season when all the cattle are housed. Many cattle die every year, from intestinal worms and other diseases. A considerable number of cows are barren.

The cattle are herded by young men and boys. As soon as the rice has dried off the grass, the herd is driven into the pasture. During the dry season, when grass is getting rare, the herds migrate into the lower and swampy parts of the country, where the grass is still flourishing; the Shilluks along the White Nile cross over to the east bank; likewise the cattle of the Sobat Shilluks descend to the lagoons south of the Sobat. So in both cases they have to cross the rivers, which is, on account of the many crocodiles living in them, not unhangerous, and is therefore done with much care and accompanied by

3:Westermann E-6 (1910) 1912 F223 Shilluk F223

retreat. Around one house they went in a regular manœuvre, and forming in a line again in front of the house for another charge.

This day represented a number of times. Then a crowd of women, who had followed their husbands and sweethearts to battle, united the part of foe, only to be overcome by the brave warriors and driven back. This part was very amusing. One old lady with great bravery snatched out and charged, using her pipe as her weapon. The men were a bit rough in driving her back, and she was evidently afraid her dear pipe would come to grief, as she took it inside our house and when next we saw her she was in the think of a fray with a long wood as her weapon of offence and defence".]

The dry season is also the time for travelling. Relatives pay mutual visits, and marriageable young men go to the Nuers and Dinkas with spears, wire, cattle, and dura, which they exchange for ebony and cattle.

IV. RELIGION.

In the religion of the Shilluks three components are clearly distinguishable: 1. *Juok (Jwok)* or God; 2. *Nyikang (Nyikaŋ)*, the progenitor and national hero of the Shilluks; 3. *ajwago (ajwaɣo)*, the witch doctor or sorcerer. These three do not exist separate from each other, but have many relations amongst one another. There are still other forms of religious service, but they are not so prominent as the three mentioned.

"*Juok (Jwok)* is a supreme being, residing above". Whether he is regarded as creator is not sure. According to the sayings of some natives he surely is, but it seems probable that this belief, if there is such a one, is young, and must be traced back to Mohammedan or Christian influences. — On certain occasions an ox is killed as a sacrifice to *Juok*, though this is done more frequently to *Nyikang*; prayers are also offered to *Juok*, but according to my information, they have only one prayer to *Juok* (for which vide page 171), while to *Nyikang* there are many. "Praying" to *Juok* is expressed by a different word from that which serves for designating a prayer to *Nyikang*; the first is *dwog* "to pray"; its original meaning is probably: to conjure. In praying to *Nyikang* loosely "to ask for, to beg" is used. While the prayers to *Nyikang* are sung, and accompanied by dances, that one to *Juok* is only spoken, not sung, and not accompanied by dancing. *Juok* has no visible symbols or temples, nor are the prayers to him offered by a priest or sorcerer, but by the chief or village-elder.

In the heart and mind of the Shilluk *Juok* does not possess a deep-rooted reach. In some way they do attribute good and evil to him, and chiefly the

3-Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 F323 Shilluk F323

others rose against the sun and his son; *vide* page 159.

When he felt his end approaching, he assembled all the chiefs of his kingdom for a splendid festival. While all were merry, suddenly a great wind arose, and scattered all those present. In this moment Nyikang took a cloth, wound it tightly round his neck, and thus choked himself.[1]

But many Shilluks firmly believe that Nyikang is still alive. The Rev. Oyler writes to me: "When I asked how Nyikang died, they were filled with astonishment at my ignorance and stoutly maintained that he never died. If he dies, all the Shilluks will die. He, *Dak*, and five other kings ascended to heaven, where Nyikang prays for the Shilluks (!). They say that he disappeared as the wind".

Nyikang is the ancestor of the Shilluk nation and the founder of the Shilluk dynasty. He is worshipped, sacrifices and prayers are offered to him; he may be said to be lifted to the rank of a demi-god, though they never forget that he has been a real man. He is expressly designated as "little" in comparison with God.

In almost every village there is a little hut dedicated to Nyikang, or to some other ancient king. In form it is like the common houses, but much smaller and more slender. On its walls sometimes rough drawings in white, red, and black colour are seen, consisting simply in line-ornaments or representing animals. These drawings are made by women, with white, red and black earth, and are renewed every year before the chief prayers are offered. These huts are commonly called *kor rig* "place of the king" i. e. of Nyikang. Besides these small huts they have a number of greater temples, which are in form like the Shilluk-hut, but of much larger size. They are found in most of the villages devoted to Nyikang. Three "sacred villages" are, Akurwar, Wau,[2] Fashkang, *Nyikwiko (Nyikiko), Ongiq, Nyalwal, Oshiny, Okyq, Dhiliyy.* These houses, the small as well as the larger, are the places where Nyikang is worshipped. In them, at least in some, a number of religious are preserved, which are considered holy and are held in great veneration. Among these are a statue of Nyikang made of sandwich-wood; the holy spear, drum, and shield of Nyikang, a digging stick, ancient metal ornaments and clothes, etc. Spoils from wars are also dedicated to Nyikang, and are preserved in the temples.

In times of need, when sickness or war are threatening, but above all when rain does not come in due time, the people assemble round the house of Nyikang and pray to him. This is done by dancing and at the same time singing prayers. At the beginning of the rainy season, when they are about to plant dura, the regular chief prayers take place; on this occasion an animal is slain as a sacrifice to Nyikang. Before the transaction of any serious business the elders of the village assemble around the temple of Nyikang, to ask for his counsel.

[1] Till the subjection of the Shilluks by the British all succeeding Shilluk kings have finished their lives by the same form of death.

[2] This Wau is not the place in the Bahr Ghazal Province, but is situated on the left bank of the White Nile between Tonjkin and Kodok.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 F323 Shilluk F323

By *Nyikang* also oaths are sworn. The expressions usually used in swearing an oath are: *Nikwi nhi!* i. e.: "*Nyikang* indeed", "by *Nyikang*!" *Nikwi wwai!* i. e. "*Nyikang* here!" or: "*Nyikang* now!" Another form is to couple his name with any of the sacred villages, as *Nikwi a Wau!* i. e. "by *Nyikang* of *Wau*!" Likewise *Nikwi a Nikwi*, etc. In their conversations they are constantly using these oaths; they often make promises under oath, which they, however, readily break without any fear of penalty. They swear also by *Dak*, or any other of the ancient kings.

SWEARING OATHS BY *NYIKANG* 645

Another mode of swearing, which is used in judicial cases only, is to swear by the holy spear (of *Nyikang*): the *ajwaja* who keeps the spear, sacrifices a sheep and puts the blood upon the accused and the accuser, and offers a prayer that justice may follow. Now the accuser or the accused or both swear by the holy spear. If a person perjures himself, death is sure to follow as penalty.

HOW *NYIKANG* APPEARS 778 [776]

Nyikang at times appears in the form of certain animals, as lukwenyuru, rats, snakes, lizards, or in birds. The tree on which such a bird alights, is considered holy, and is henceforth dedicated to *Nyikang*; beads and pieces of cloth are suspended on its branches, sacrifices and prayers are offered below it. When once the Turks felled such a tree without knowing its destination, never fell on the ly-standing Shilluks; they walked in procession round the tree, filled the air with lamentations, and killed an ox to propitiate their ancestor.

NYIKANG AND THE "PROPHETS" 776 772 643 [778]

Though *Nyikang* is considered inferior to *Juok*, sometimes the names of both are called simultaneously in the same prayer. In some prayers the name of *Dak*, a son of *Nyikang*, is also invoked besides that of *Nyikang*; but this is not frequent. It seems, however, that in some measure the sacred descendants of *Nyikang*, or rather the ancient kings of the Shilluks, enjoy some kind of veneration, though perhaps this may not be called religious. They sometimes talk about the *rin*, which is the plural of *rig* king, and has in this connection the meaning of "Prophets", or one analogous to that of the "Judges" of the earliest Hebrews. In several villages there are huts, like those of *Nyikang*, dedicated to one of these ancient kings or "*rin*".

JUOK AND *NYIKANG* 776

In the political, religious and personal life *Nyikang* takes a far more important place than *Juok*. *Nyikang* is the national hero, on whom each Shilluk feels proud, who is praised in innumerable popular songs and sayings; he is not only a superior being, but also a man. He is the ultimate model for every true Shilluk; everything they value most in their national and private life, has its origin in him: their kingdom and their fighting as well as cattle-breeding and farming. While *Nyikang* is their good father, who only does them good, *Juok* is the great, uncontrollable power, which is to be propitiated, in order to avoid his inflictions of evil.

3. Westermann E-9 (1910) 1952 F223 Shilluk F223

773 THE CATTLE OF NYIKANG

The natives frequently speak of the "cows of Nyikang". This expression is used in two different meanings, one mythological and one real.

Once Nyikang caught a cow in the river in a fish-net. It had no ears or horns. This cow was the beginning of a sacred herd; if anyone touched those who were not of their attendants, he died. They live in the river and come out to feed at night. This herd was carried away; some say the Dinkalaus took them, while others affirm that it was the Turks. From the dung of this herd the "ashes of dunging" were gained. The ashes were made by burning the dung of the sacred cattle. They are preserved at Wau and other villages dedicated to Nyikang, and are applied in ordeals, when cases of adultery are to be tried. When the woman has confessed, but the case denies, they take recourse to the "ashes of dunging". An old chief, taking a spear in his hand, stands erect and offers the following prayer: "Yoo Nyikang, the ashes are yours! If this man has not had intercourse with this woman, may he escape! But if he has had intercourse with the woman, may he die! If this woman accuses falsely, may she escape!" After this the chief takes some of the ashes on his hand and strikes the man with it. Then the one who has sworn falsely, will die.

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The other applications of the term is to cows devoted to Nyikang by the king. Each year the king gives a steer and a cow to the villages in which the cows of Nyikang are kept. The male is killed and used for food. If any person not belonging to the attending herdsmen, eats of the meat of these animals, he becomes a servant of Nyikang, and must take up his residence in that village. The female is kept for breeding purposes. The *Kwe Obijo* (vide page 130) herd these cattle. The chief of these villages of Nyikang seems to be Wau. If an outsider tried to milk one of these cows, he would die.

956 SORCERY
791
783

The third factor in the religion of the Shilluks is the *ajwâjo*, and what is connected with him; *ajwâjo* is the witch doctor or sorcerer; the word is probably derived from *juok* "God", and would then mean: "one who is dependent on God", or "who has to do with God". As his most prominent business is to procure rain, Europeans generally call him rain-maker. He is the mediator between the people and Nyikang; he leads the dances and prayers to Nyikang, and presides at the sacrificial ceremonies. He heals also sicknesses by administering charms. Sick people apply to him with the present of a sheep or goat, or even an ox; the animal is killed, and the contents of its stomach are laid on the sick person's body; or the skin of the animal is cut into strips and these are fastened below the knee of the patient. This is also applied as a protection against dangers on a journey. When in the dry season the cattle are brought across the river, the sorcerer has to prepare charms to protect them from being seized by crocodiles. Besides this he is able to perform miracles, to kill

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 F223 Shilluk F223

III. SICKNESS.

11. Treatment of Sick People.

*Ŋhɔ̀ ha̱ mɛ̀ŋɛ́ yí jwɔ̱ɔ̱k, ka̱ ɲí dwɔ̱ɔ̱, ka̱ ɲí kɛ̀ɲ́, kɔ́nɔ: ŋhɔ̀ a kwɔ̀ŋ wɔ́ɔ ká jwɔ̱ɔ̱k? Kɛ́ ɲí ɔ́ kɛ̀ɲ́ɔ́: ŋhɔ̀ a mɛ̀ŋɛ́ kɔ́ɔ́ yí jwɔ̱ɔ̱k? Kɛ́ ɔ̀ɲɛ́ dwɔ̱ɔ̱, ka̱ ŋhɔ̀ kɔ́nɔ́ ɔ́nɔ́ jwɔ̱ɔ̱k, ka̱ yɛ́ɛ́ ɔ̀ɲɛ́ ɔ́ɔ́, ka̱ yí wɔ́ɔ́ ŋɔ, kɔ́ ɔ̀ɲɛ́ a ɔ́ɔ́, ɔ́ɔ́nɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́ ɲɔ́k, ka̱ ɔ́ɔ́nɔ́ yí ŋhɔ̀. Kɛ́ ŋhɔ̀ ŋhɔ́. Kɛ́ ɲɔ́k a kɔ́ɲ́ jwɔ̱ɔ̱ɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́ kɛ́ ŋɔ, ka̱ ɔ́ɲɔ́ɲɔ́ dwɔ̱ɔ̱. Kɛ́ ɔ́ɲɔ́ɲɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́, ka̱ a kɔ́ɔ́ɲ́ kɔ́nɔ: ɔ́ɔ́nɔ́ kɛ́ kɔ́ɔ́, ka̱ a kɔ́: ɔ́ɔ́nɔ́ kɛ́ kɔ́ɔ́, ka̱ a kɔ́: ɔ́ɔ́nɔ́ kɛ́ ɔ́ɔ́, ka̱ a kɔ́: ɔ́ɔ́nɔ́ kɛ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́? Kɛ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́ kɛ́ɛ́, ka̱ ŋhɔ̀ a kɔ́ɔ́ ɲɔ́ɛ́, kɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́, ka̱ ɔ́ɔ́nɔ́ yɔ́ɔ́ kɛ́ɛ́, ka̱ ɔ́ɔ́nɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲɔ́ ɔ́ɔ́ɲ

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 F223 Shilluk F223

VIII. PRAYERS AND RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.

61. A Prayer to God.

Mitid gâu, gâmo jwogh, dîg gâ kwânîdâ gâu kî wupe. A kîr jî kîjîl dhâni kîpe. Ke 539*
dhâgî kî kîjîl dhâno, dhâgî nî, a dhâgî kî wujî, dhânî nî. Dîg gâ wudîn gâu kî gâu dhâno a
wî wdîn jî, kî gâu a wî wdîn, kî wdî a kîdî gâu. Dhâni ma jîlgî wdîn, gâmo jwogh; gâmo
kjâ kwo Nyîkango; jîwog wâno a dhâgî kî jwogh; gâmo kjâ kwo, kî nâwî Dâk. A gâjgî
ryenâ, ryenâ fa wdîjî gâu? Nîwnî à dhâgî gâwî gîdînî, jî dî, ryenog fa kwîg gî; gâmo
jwogh, dîg gâ wî tîwnî wdîn? Jwîp gâu, gâmo jwogh, kî gwo gâ Nîdînî, kî nâwî Dâk?
Dîg wdî fa wdîgî dîg? Pîwog gâu a tîwî wdîl.

Chîgî, kî gîwnî chwdîp, kî wdî kwânî, ka dîn wo kwno a wo da jwogh, kî gî wupe wa.
Ke gâ gîwnî dîjî, twog dîdîg, ka kîr gwîn dîjî, ka gîl kwânîdwâno; fa kîl gî jî. Kî
chwdî wdîjîgî, ka kjwî fwî, wogh jwogh.

"I implore thee, thou God, I pray to thee during the night. How are all people 539*
kept by thee all days! And thou walkest in the midst of the (high) grass, I 782.●
walk with thee; when I sleep in the house, I sleep with thee. To thee I pray 755
for food, and thou givest it to the people; and water to drink; and the soul is kept (alive) by thee. There is no one above thee, thou God. Thou bestowest the grandfather of Nyikango; it is thou (Nyikango) who walkest with God; thou bestowest the grandfather (*of man*), and thy son Dak. If a famine comes, is it not given by thee? So as this cow stands here, is it not thou: if she dies, does her blood not go to thee? Thou God, to whom shall we pray, is it not to thee? Thou God, and thou who bestowest Nyikango, and thy son Dak! But the soul (*of man*), is it not thine own? It is thou who liftest up (the sick)."

That is all; and the cow is speared; and the contents of her stomach are taken out, and are thrown on the body of the man who is sick ("in with God"); and water is poured on his body. And one ear of the cow is cut off. (It is cut into strips, these are tied together and the whole) is tied round the leg (*of the sick one*). And the right forelimb (*of the cow*) is cut off, and it is cooked at once; the people are not allowed to taste of it. They make a little broth out of it; that is poured on the ground: it is the thing (property) of God.[1]

63. A Prayer for Rain and the Ceremonies connected with it.

Tyyî a wdîn dî kîwâ, ka gâ kjwo kjwo kjwo, kjwo kî gâjp kî kwîjî, ka gâ kjwog, ka 539*
rîî a wdîr, ka gâ wwogwog, ka gî gwdîl kî kwo kwdîng, kî kwo kjîjo, kî kwo wo, kî
chwdîp. Ke wîwo gâ gwdîr, ka gâ chîjwîjî, ka kyyî a gîîr, ka gîwnî kîjî, ka gîwnî chwdîp.

[1] This is said to be the only prayer to Jwok. It is prayed on any occasion when a wind, an sickness, famine, war, falls on the people. The prayer is said by "old people", by the chief, or some other respected person of the village. The children were taught it by Nyikang.

J. Westermann E-6 (9910) 1912 F723 Shilluk F723

*539 *Ke jam Nyi̱ŋ, ke Chyi̱ (Chyiki) Nyiŋ kjam Nyiŋ, kɛ tjɛ̱ cɛ̱kjɛ̱, ke wɛɛ̱ kɛ̱ wɔr, ke tjɛ̱ cɛ̱kjɛ̱, ke wɛ̱ a kwɔɔ̱k.*

Yɛ kwɔɔ̱k kɛ̱ wɛ̱kjɛ̱k, wɛ̱ kjɛ̱k tjɛ̱r. Pan a cɛ̱ jɔr, Lɛɛ-dɛ̱r cɛ̱ dɛ̱ wɛ̱k. Yɛ kjɛ̱t yi wɛ̱kjɛ̱ kwɔɔ̱k ro Nyikwɛ̱, Akɛ̱k, ɛ̱ɛ̱ Nyikɛ̱k.

*539 The women come, all of them go to scratch the ground for mud, then they come and hammer the temple of the "king", they prepare the mud, and make stripes on the temple with red colour, and with black colour, and with white colour, and with soot. When they have finished this drawing, then they dance. After this dance is pounded, a cow is brought, the cow is speared; they bring out the little drum of Nyikango, and all the Shilluks come, and the people dance, and when the eight women, they continue dancing, and (while dancing) they pray to the "king":[1]

"I beg for some little things (food), to put into my mouth. The earth has been spoiled by the people; Lwoydwer[2] is travelling (on the earth). I go to our grandfather, the child of the daughter of Nyikwɛ̱, to Akɛ̱k, the children of Nyikango."

64. A Religious Ceremony.

The people went, the tom (the small drum belonging to Nyikang) was beaten, they danced to the tom; and the people were beaten by the king;[3] it was a very strong drum. When it was finished, the people put the drum on the ground; then they told stories about Nyikang. After that, the people went into the house of the women (or the shrine) (of the king). The spear of Nyikang was brought out, and the people bowed their heads. A sheep was brought, it was killed; the spear of Nyikang was washed with water; the people ran to the river bank. They beat the tom vigorously, then the people came back to dance. After that they scattered. The next day they beat the tom again, the people came again to dance, and after four days they dispersed.

65. How the Cattle is brought across the River.

623 When the chief of a village wants to talk about the cattle, he assembles the 787 people, and addresses them. "Ye people, the grass is finished now, what shall 233 we do concerning the cattle?" The people reply, "Ah, that is your business!" He says, "Well, being the wizard!" The sorcerer comes, and a goat, a spear, and a hoe are given to him. And he says, "Milk the cows!" And the cows are milked, early in the morning. Then he says, "Loosen the cattle!" They take the ambach boats, and the cows come (are tied) behind the ambach boats. The sorcerer ties grass together, and he ties it a second time on the side of the river

[1] the "king" is Nyikang or any other ancient king, to whom the temple is dedicated.
[2] "the army of Dwer", perhaps a mythical allusion.
[3] that is, they danced into a state of trance, being possessed by the spirit of the deceased king.

4:Butt E-4 (no date) 1952 F323 Shilluk F323

It would appear, therefore, that in judicial and administrative matters the Shilluk *reth* is far from being an over-riding or autocratic political authority. Local chiefs seem to be free to follow their own traditional courses without such interference. In actual powers of government and administration, and in personal prerogatives, the *reth* may be little more than a mediator in disputes and perhaps the balancing force which decides a quarrel one way or another. It is in ritual matters that his real position and powers are indicated.

THE RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RETH

Evans-Pritchard writes: "Both his functions and his status are primarily of a ritual order. He makes sacrifices on important occasions, especially for rain and for victory in war, and it is his duty to provide cattle for the sacred herds of Nyikang at Nyilual and Wau and a cow for Nyikang's shrine at Nyibudho.(1)

It is noticeable that everywhere there is the closest connection between the political structure and the religious cult.

(a) The territorial segments and their association with certain dominant lineages are explained in terms of the myth of Nyikang's division of the country among his followers who became the founding ancestors of many of the Shilluk clans.

(b) The lineage heads who are chiefs of settlements have ritual duties to the kingship. They perform ceremonial services at the time of the *reth*'s investiture, are responsible for building huts in festivals and for the upkeep of Nyikang's shrines and those of past *reths*. The tombs of the dead kings are indistinguishable from the shrines of Nyikang and have the same ceremonial importance in rain-making ceremonies, harvest rituals and so forth.

(c) The traditional customs of the people and the organization of society in every way are considered to be the work of Nyikang directly or acting in the line of *reths*.

(d) The identification of Nyikang with the king is the central point of the Shilluk political, ritual and moral system. The people believe that Nyikang reigns and manifests himself in the *reth*. Nyikang is also the medium between the Shilluk and Juok - their chief spirit. The Shilluk consider the *reth* to be in close communication with the mystic forces of life, and Nyikang is the connecting link, participating in Juok as he does in the *reth*.(2)

The *reth* is considered to come under the category of Divine kings, as described by Fraser in *The Golden Bough*. This is clear from the mode of his death and succession as well as from the duties he performs during his lifetime.

Succession of the Reth

Only the son of a *reth* who has reigned is eligible, and a *nyireth* may

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, pp.16-17.
(2) *Ibid.*, p.19.

4:Dutt E-4 (no date) 1952 F223 Shilluk F223

would marry women from lineage A as this would prevent the correct working of the relationship of avoidance and would confuse the situation. Each lineage therefore develops a tendency to marry women of some other specific lineage,(1) but this is a traditional convention only and not compulsory.

In addition to the ordinary ore relationship between two lineages it is dangerous for a man to have sexual relations with a member of a lineage which is ore in the second degree. B, C and D may have an ore relationship, through customary intermarriage, with other lineages, E, F, G and H. If a man of lineage A seduced a girl of lineage E then all the men of lineage B would be offended, since they regard marriage with girls of E as their prerogative, and there is an ore relationship between the two lineages as there is through A and B. Senile sickness would result from the offence in the same way as if a man had relations with a woman who was a blood relation.

Terminology

Pumphrey gives a list of Shilluk kinship terms,(2) among which may be noted the absence of any single word for brother, such a kinsman being described as father's son or mother's son. The Shilluk kinship terms used to describe members of the immediate family are extended to others of the same generation, and from this descriptive terminology a classificatory system is formed.

RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

There are three major aspects of Shilluk belief and ritual: the recognition and worship of Juok, the cult of Nyikang and the kings in whom he has been reincarnated, and the cult of the ancestral spirits. In addition there are less important beliefs such as the belief in the spirits of the bush and river.

JUOK

The concept of Juok is found in many of the Nilotic tribal groups although beliefs concerning it vary. Among the Shilluk Juok refers to a spirit which is universal, formless and invisible like the air. Juok is above Nyikang and man though he is approached principally through Nyikang. The Shilluk perform sacrifices to Nyikang which cause him to move Juok to send rain, to prevent misfortune, remove sickness and so forth. Juok is so linked to Nyikang that he is seldom approached in prayer without mention of the latter as intercessor. Juok is vaguely associated with the firmament and is recognised as creator though he is believed to show little interest in man owing to his greatness which is so far above them.

Hofmayr(3) states that the Shilluk put adjectives to the word Juok in order to bring out one or other of his attributes:

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.30. (2) *Ibid.*, pp.37-9.
(3) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, pp.186-7 and p.193.

776

Juok *Ficere*, means a whirlwind;
Juok *Nen*, " river spirit;
Juok *Acwari*, " creator;
Jane Juok, " things made by Juok such as food etc.;
Juok *Tin*, " wood spirit;
Juok *Ayin*, " protector.

Anything that cannot be understood is Juok. Juok is thus a plurality but he is also one spirit; he may be either good or bad, or neither, he is potentially all three. He may bring sickness, may protect people or he may merely stand aloof from human affairs. Certain diseases are specifically associated with him. The cult of Juok is not expressed in any external action or ritual; it is found in a few songs and prayers, and Juok is invoked only when appeals to the ancestors and to Nyikang fail. [753]

THE CULT OF NYIKANG

Nyikang is the hero of most of the Shilluk myths and traditions. He is the culture hero, founder of the nation, and the popular ideal, and though probably an historical person in the first instance, his acts and words have become sacralised in myths. The Shilluk regard him as a divine or semi-divine being. They say he did not die but disappeared in a whirlwind during a festival held at Akurwa. The spirit of Nyikang is supposed to be present in certain places, men and animals. Every *reth* at the moment of his installation, when sitting on the royal stool, is possessed by the spirit of Nyikang so that it is Nyikang who becomes king again (see above). The spirit of Nyikang is regarded as closely associated with certain shrines, which are regarded as his homesteads; in particular he is present, at certain times, in his effigy at Akurwa.

There are ten shrines of Nyikang in Shilluk country, the most important being at Akurwa and Fenyikang. Seligman describes them as a group of two or more huts, of the same circular form as dwelling-huts but slightly larger, enclosed in a fence of millet stalks. The huts are particularly well thatched and the apex of the roof terminates in an ostrich egg from which projects the blade of a spear.(1) The huts are taboo to all except the priests of Nyikang and the old people who tend them. The attendants and priests of the royal grave shrines and the shrines to Nyikang are known as *bureth*; they are the ex-wives of kings, people liable to epileptic fits (which are held to indicate possession by Nyikang or a dead king), and certain old men who appear, according to Seligman, to have a hereditary connection with the shrine. The *bureth* keep the shrine clean, receive the sacrifices and officiate at the ceremonies. They eat the meat of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine.

346 778 778 793

The worship of Nyikang at his various shrines consists of sacrifices and prayers. The two most important annual ceremonies are the rain-making ceremony, held just before the rains, and the harvest festival, when the millet is cut and first-fruits are offered to Nyikang. Each new *reth* should send cattle to each shrine of Nyikang and also various other presents. Offerings are given at the shrines when a person is sick so that Nyikang should make him well. Offerings and ceremonies invoking Nyikang's aid are

778 782

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.77.

made at all times of stress and misfortune. Everything round a shrine is sacred, especially trees - they are particularly rare in Shillukland in any case.

Certain Shilluk kings, particular incarnations of Nyikang, tend to be identified with particular species of animals. If such an animal approaches the shrine without signs of fear, it is assumed to be the form in which Nyikang appears, and a sacrifice is offered at the shrine. Almost any unusual behaviour on the part of an animal would lead the Shilluk to look on it as a temporary incarnation of Nyikang. Nyikang's mother, Nikaiva, is reputed to have been a crocodile and is believed to live in the river in that form. A sacrifice is made to her by throwing a live sheep into the river. The crocodile is generally spared even though these creatures are a danger in river crossings.

There is a limited cult of the Dinka spirit Dengsit, and also a belief in the spirits of the bush and river.

THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS

Beliefs concerning the ancestral spirits are vague. Reference is made to *pun juok*, 'the country of the dead', which is reached by the spirit after long wandering through the bush, but it is also believed that the spirit persists in or around the grave. Offerings and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirits by the head of a household or local lineage on behalf of the descendants. If there is sickness or misfortune or the possibility of danger, a person will pray to his ancestors and make an animal sacrifice to propitiate them.

The ancestral cult seems, however, to be overshadowed by the national cult of Nyikang and the royal ancestors.

TOTEMIC BELIEFS

Seligman suggests that Shilluk totemism may have been derived from the Dinka because it seems so slight and unimportant. According to Hofmayr and Westermann the clans appear to have totems and some clans derive themselves from an animal or fish which Nyikang took and turned into people in order to populate the country. Hofmayr states that totem animals are often killed but it is considered wrong to eat them.(1) Most totems are animals but a few are plants. Children inherit their totems from their fathers; a woman keeps hers even when she is married.(2)

MAGICAL PRACTICES

The Witchdoctor (Ajuago)

Ajuago means 'man of Juok'. Such people are regarded as possessing certain magical powers which they use for the good of the community. People go to them when they are in need of help and pay them for their assistance. The powers of the *ajuago* are believed to be due to their

(1) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, p.235.
(2) *Ibid.*

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954. FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

a third, a spiritual or ideal, dimension. To put this in another way, the Shilluk quotation suggests that what is material has another, non-material, dimension, and we are told that *juok* is 'present to a greater or lesser degree in all things'.[1] Although *juok*, as the first principle, is the ultimate explanation for everything, the notion of *juok* seems to be particularly used to account for such phenomena as elude explanation in less abstract terms. It is a necessary logical concept for the Shilluk. Seligman quotes Dr. Heasty as saying of *juok* that 'he appears to be one, and yet seems to be a plurality as well . . . anything the Shilluk cannot understand is *juok*'.[2] That is, what the Shilluk cannot otherwise account for, they account for by this concept. So, for example, the creation of the world and of life is the work of *juok*, and he may also be an explanation for sickness and death. The presence and powers of the foreigners are explained with reference to *juok*, for those who are specially gifted are supposed to be so by virtue of the stronger flow, in them, of the being which created and animates the universe. *Juok*, therefore, is the support of Nyikang and the Shilluk kings. Since they represent, for the Shilluk, the order of the society and the world in which they live, and since *juok* has his place in that order, it is to be expected that for them Nyikang should also be an indication of the nature of God. So, in what Hofmayr says is the oldest Shilluk song, Nyikang is represented as speaking for God 'thus God says'.[3] This association between God and Nyikang is, of course, what has led to the anthropological study of Nyikang and his successors as 'divine kings'. God and Nyikang are two terms of Shilluk thought which cannot be reduced to any third term, but co-exist and participate in each other.

Relation of Nyikang to God

Examples of this are numerous. It is said that there are few direct appeals to God, and that Nyikang is usually invoked as an intermediary. Westermann quotes a prayer which 'is said to be the only prayer to *juok*', and says that the Shilluk were taught it by Nyikang. This explanation was, presumably, given him by a Shilluk, and is an example of their interpretation of God by Nyikang already mentioned. Part of the prayer runs:

> There is no one above thee, thou God. Thou becamest the grandfather of Nyikango; it is thou (Nyikango) who walkest with God; thou becamest the grandfather (of man), and thy son Dak. If famine comes, is it not given by thee? So as this cow stands here, is it not thus: if she dies, does her blood not go to thee? Thou God, and thou who becamest Nyikango, and thy son Dak! But the soul (of man), is it not thine own? It is thou who liftest up (the sick).[4]

The association between Nyikang and God in this prayer is so close that it is sometimes difficult to know which is addressed. Since the Shilluk myth and tradition tell them much more about the nature of Nyikang, who is a man, than about the nature of God, who is not, it is to be expected that they

[1] Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 8.
[2] C. G. Seligman, 1932, p. 76.
[3] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 7.
[4] Westermann, 1912, p. 171.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

should understand the more abstract notion, God, by the less abstract, Nyikang. A still clearer example of the approximation of Nyikang to God in Shilluk thought is to be found in a prayer, part of which runs:

> We praise you, you who are God. Protect us, we are in your hands, and protect us, save me. You and Nikawng, you are the ones, who created, . . . and it is you Nikawng, who are accustomed to assist God to save, and it is you who give the rain. The sun is yours, and the sea (river) is yours, you who are Nikawng . . . The cow (for sacrifice) is here for you, and the blood will go to God and you.[1]

Here also may be seen the attribution to Nyikang of control of the sun and the river which, along with the rain mentioned in the first prayer, are the features of the Shilluk world upon which their prosperity ultimately depends, and which may help or ruin them.

God, Nyikang, and the Shilluk kings seem to form a continuum in the Shilluk religious system. Nyikang is thus sometimes called *juok piny* (*piny* being earth or world) while God is either simply *juok*, or *juok mal*, God above. The Shilluk king, the representative of Nyikang, is chosen ultimately by God, as he is accepted and possessed proximately by Nyikang. A long Shilluk epic begins with the lines 'Nyikang joined with God, the election was held . . .', the election being that of King Kur.[2] There are reports of a form of election slightly different from that described earlier in this essay. In Hofmayr's account the king-elect is agreed upon by the electors much in the way described, but Nuba from Liri, with whom Nyikang formed a relationship, are said to come with pebbles, which represent those who have a right to succeed. These pebbles, one of which has been prepared beforehand to represent the chosen candidate, are thrown into the fire, and the pebble representing the king-elect turns red, or white, or red and white. Red stands for prosperity in cattle, white for good crops. The chosen prince is then challenged to fight at night and, if he acquits himself well, he is told that he is a brave man, and that God has decreed that he shall be king of the Shilluk. The installation ceremonies then proceed. At one point in them, when the king-elect enters the village of Debalo on his way to the capital at Fashoda, the chief of Debalo asks him, 'What do you want here?' and the king-elect replies, 'I am the man sent by God to rule the land of the Shilluk'.[3] Despite the election there is thus a 'fiction' that it is God who chooses the Shilluk king and is the ultimate support of the Shilluk kingship. The order of the Shilluk kingdom depends upon Nyikang and the king, and Nyikang and the king derive their positions from God.

The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk

The connexion between God and Nyikang is of great importance in defining the sort of 'divine kingship' which is the central feature of the Shilluk

[1] Oyler, 1918, (ii) p. 283.

[2] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 451.

[3] Hofmayr, 1925, pp. 145 ff. Westermann, (1912, p. 122) gives an account of yet another form of election, in which sticks are placed in a fire, the one which flames most representing the king-elect.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

a cow, for example. In a text given by Westermann[1] the hare is taught and saved by *juok*. The hare (or rabbit) is said by Hofmayr to be the favourite figure in many Shilluk animal stories, and the stories quoted by him and by Westermann show how clever, and how lucky, the hare is. A story given by Hofmayr[2] about the hare's eating young crocodiles appears in a different form in Westermann,[3] where this act is attributed to Dak, the clever son of Nyikang. The moral of these stories is that astuteness and trickery, like knowledge, pay, and it seems as though unusual intelligence, ingenuity, and luck associate those who possess them with the divine intelligence, and the success for which God is the Shilluk explanation. Hofmayr gives as a translation for the Shilluk expression *juoga tarr*, 'that which I have from the highest being, my soul, my lot, luck, my other self, is favourable to me'.[4] The large number of Shilluk riddles is an indication of the high value set on cleverness and ingenuity, and it is to be expected that these qualities, held up for admiration in their stories and in their daily life, should be ideally associated with Nyikang and their kings.

The kings, and all others inspired by *juok*, are sacred because they manifest divine energy and knowledge, and they do so by being strong, cunning, and successful, as well as by appearing to be in closer touch with the supra-human than are ordinary men. The signs of this closer communion are dreams and 'hysterical' possession, or at least some outward sign of contact with a superior power. Examples of behaviour showing this are numerous. In the installation ceremonies of 1943, when the king-elect was set on the sacred stool of Nyikang at a climax in the ceremony, we are told that 'the *reth* (king) was seized with a trembling fit at the critical moment, and certainly he appeared to be in a dazed condition immediately afterwards'.[5] This form of behaviour is a common sign of possession by a power greater than human among other Nilotic peoples. Though there was some reference in these ceremonies to the king as the source of justice, and to the ethical qualities necessary in a ruler, they were clearly distinct from the central religious significance of the ceremonies. So also, though we find many references in Shilluk texts to God as the helper of the poor and the final court of appeal in trouble, his activity in these respects is not to be taken as an indication that he is only or primarily an apotheosis of ethical virtue. Many of the hymns to Nyikang and God are laments that the land is being destroyed because they are not helping, and we are told that when their prayers are not answered, the Shilluk may curse Nyikang for not assisting them.[6] A Shilluk proverb says that 'God threads good and evil men on a single string', suggesting that, in some circumstances at least, God does not seem to reward virtue and punish vice.[7] In other texts he is shown as the ultimate sanction for customary ethical behaviour, as a helper, and as a

[1] 1912, p. 180.
[2] 1925, p. 376.
[3] Op. cit., 155.
[4] Op. cit., p. 193.
[5] Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 62.
[6] Oyler, 1918 (ii), p. 285.
[7] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 376.

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

628 643 led by the guard, and then motored on to Owaci who were similarly started off, about eight hundred strong, also in four companies.

There was a large assembly uniting at the meeting place, with three bullocks and four sheep for sacrifice. These were provided by the *reth* and the two factions.

[631] Two neutral Chiefs had previously been told off to lead the factions to the meeting place which had been marked. This is important because experience has shown[1] that left to themselves the two factions will sit down about two hundred yards apart and then the memory of stolen cattle or a murdered brother will be too much for someone's self-control resulting in a flow of martial oratory. This will lead some young blood to dash forward and hurl spears or insults and there follows retaliation. If they can be got to move up close together without pause, it is obvious that the consequences of any hostilities will be so serious that anyone trying to start anything will instantly be suppressed by his wiser brethren in arms.

Both factions were finally got to sit down close up to the line and to put their shields on the ground as a sign of mutual confidence. The *reth* walked among them and briefly addressed them and they answered that they wanted peace. He was rather an impressive figure and seemed to have the situation under confident control. Some concerted hand-clapping was taken as a good sign by the public.

[782] The *reth*'s bullock was then led between one faction and the guard, thrown on its back, held by men of both factions, speared by men of both factions and had its throat cut.[2] Next, a procession of neutrals was formed who took hand-fulls of the stomach contents and marched round throwing it at the factions. The next item caused most interest among the public. Thworo got up, marched round the guard and sat down touching Owaci who had the good manners to remain seated. Owaci's bull and sheep were led up, but put aside to be sacrificed at the shrine of Queen Abûjok in Thworo next day. Thworo's bull was then led up and killed just as the *reth*'s had been by persons with an active interest in the feud.

[787] Lesser folk killed the sheep, one of which got up and managed to stagger a few steps under a rain of spear thrusts. This was considered a bad omen and one by-stander recalled the abortive peace between Faalo and Fanyidwai in 1926.[3]

[648] This cannot be quoted as evidence of the *reth*'s executive powers, for we know that he was accompanied by the District Commissioner on this occasion, but certain interesting facts emerge. In the first place, the attitude of opposition between the two groups is clearly stressed, though it is more than probable that at proceedings of this kind a display of hostile attitudes is demanded by convention. The author indicates that the *reth* busies himself with the actual organization of the ceremonies and certainly acts as arbitrator, visiting first one side and then the other. It is unfortunate that little mention is made of the ritual functions of the *reth*. In 1920 the Rev. D. S.

[114] Oyler described a similar peace ceremony in the settlements of Maimom, Fakoi, I'atworo, and I'alo[4] and his account of the procedure does not greatly differ from that of Titherington. He implies throughout that the desire for peace came from the participants and there is no suggestion that peace was forced upon them, even though the *Mamur*[5] was present. 'The people of this District', he says 'were tired of con-

[1] Titherington makes no reference to instances from which such experience derived. It must be assumed that some peace ceremonies failed from the start.

[2] Shilluk say that each man concerned should stab the sacrificial ox, which is then split (*ŋol*) and the two portions divided among the respective parties. This procedure is reminiscent of all ceremonies performed in Nilotic tribes for the restoration of peaceful relations.

[3] Unpublished District records by G. W. Titherington, at Malakal, dated 3.4.32.

[4] Oyler, the Rev. D. S. 'The Shilluk Peace Ceremony', *S.N.R.*, 1920.

[5] Sudanese (or more probably Egyptian) administrative officer.

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

some of the beasts are sacrificed during the ceremonies and others are added to their personal herds. One must, therefore, beg the question whether those portions alleged to be the right of the *reth* were ritual fees of this nature rather than 'fines' as is so frequently stated. It is a question of interpretation, and I suggest that even though repressive action and the exaction of 'fines' may have occurred, with the backing of foreign Governments, during the latter half of the last century and the early years of the present Administration, the payments were ritual in origin and concerned the *reth*'s ritual function in society. The use of the word 'fine' appears to me to be inaccurate.

Ritual of Purification for Homicide

As among other Nilotic peoples, a Shilluk who has killed another must perform certain rites to cleanse him from impurity which might otherwise affect his kinsmen. This process involves, first, the letting of blood, which is carried out by a magical expert (*ajwogo*)[1] who makes a small incision on his right shoulder with a spear. This is known as *tai dhani*. Secondly, a small sacrifice is made (usually a sheep), the object of which is to remove the curse of the dead man's spirit. As among the Nuer and Dinka, the killer is not expected to eat or drink until this ritual has been performed.

Accidental Killing

Accidental killing (*agweny*) is apparently not regarded as a serious offence among the Shilluk, especially if the two parties are connected by kinship or by close association in one territory. Hofmayr says: 'Accidental killing requires only the sacrifice of an ox at a peace ceremony and no more.'[2] District records indicate that two head of cattle sometimes were paid. At the Shilluk Chiefs' Council in 1934 it is recorded that 'the Council do not know whether there is a definite law on this subject or not. The *reth* says that years ago it was two head of cattle, one to the relatives of the dead man, one to the *reth*. He himself suggests two head of cattle to go to the deceased's family. This is confirmed as law.' I do not think that any such fixed indemnity existed in the past, but that intention was recognized and accident accepted in mitigation of the offence. At any rate the indignation of the deceased's kinsmen would not be so acute, and they would be prepared to accept an indemnity less than that normally demanded for intentional homicide.

Bodily Injuries not causing Death

On the subject of bodily injuries less than death, the evidence is even less reliable than on homicide. It is evident that such injuries require the payment of compensation if retaliatory action is not to follow. At the same time it is perhaps surprising that among the Shilluk, unlike the Nuer and Dinka, there are no recognized injuries for which compensation is given on a definite scale. We hear that 'for injury' an immediate payment of one bull must be made as a guarantee of good faith. Subsequent settlement is made on a scale regulated by the severity of the ultimate damage and rising, in the case of blinding, to the same rate as for death. Apart from the problem of the *reth*'s intervention in matters of this sort, it may be assumed, in the absence of

amount to eight cattle out of a total of forty.

[1] *Ajwogo:* Magical expert or specialist. These persons are not comparable to the Nuer functionaries, such as the *kwar kwar*, but to the possessors of spirits (*gwan kwath*). *Ajwogo* is a derivative of *Juok*, meaning God in Shilluk.

[2] Op. cit.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

As a class they are without mercy, and do not intercede for the children, who are killed. However, if an evil medicine man has a son afflicted in a like manner, he spares his life. They try to keep people ignorant of the fact that they have the evil power, and when someone mentions the work of the evil medicine man in the presence of one of the class, he usually says «why are they so evil?».

They belong to the dark as they always work at night, and when one is seen casting his charm on the house of another, if he tries to run away he may be killed, and no punishment is inflicted on the murderer; but if he is caught, and held, and then killed, the murderer is fined. If he is caught, he must pay a fine as though he had killed a man. It is very difficult to hold them, as they blind their captors temporarily by throwing some medicine in their eyes.

The statement is made that they usually try to cast their charms on houses where people are sick, and that accounts for some of their apparently wonderful achievements. This statement is also borne out by one case at the mission. The calves had been dying from some disease. One night an evil medicine man came, and made a great hole in the mud wall of the barn. Some object, perhaps a snake, had been dragged among the calves, and sticks were placed in a certain manner in front of the opening. The herder was in great distress, as he was sure all of the calves would die, but not another one died from that disease.

The people firmly believe in this black art, and apparently in many cases at least the victims believe themselves possessed of this power. They go out into a desert place at night, and pray thus: «You, who are God give me this person to kill. Why was I created thus if it was not that I was to kill?» If he does not succeed at the first attempt, he tries till he is successful. Their belief in their own powers is also shown by the fact that the little boys of this class work charms on their little play fellows, apparently practising their powers. Perhaps the child has heard much of his own evil powers, and he desires to learn whether or not he can do the wonderful things attributed to him, and as he tries he becomes convinced of his own power.

To call a man a *jal yat* is a serious matter even though it is a well known fact that he has the power. The person making the statement must

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

755 to encircle him with his legs. The medicine man then spits on his hands, and strikes the patient lightly. He then places his hands in the arm pits of the afflicted person, and proceeds to knead his whole body, and then concludes by stretching the patient's fingers. A chicken is then killed, put in a cooking vessel, and buried. A burning torch is then passed in circles about the head of the patient. Three biglig pegs are then driven in the ground near his door, and the medicine man taking water in his hands blesses it, and sprinkles it on the ground by the pegs, and as he sprinkles it he prays: «Help my breast that the man may live. I have worked; the matter rests with you, you are God, it was you, who created, and the tree (medicine).»

[782]

Others add to the above by grinding up a bit of a certain plant, and giving it to the patient in water. Then grass is tied in little knots, and scattered on the road, and the patient is then put in a house, and a spear stuck up near his head to guard him.

754 602 The evil medicine men kill their own relatives first so as to inherit their property.

754 756 Sometimes when the evil medicine man is old, he reforms and leaves all his old practices, and hires his powers to help people. When they try to help, they are very powerful. A story was told by different people, but none of them were eye witnesses of the cure, though they had it from a man who was present.

To begin the cure, two oxen were paid. The patient was tied so he could not move, and laid on the ground. The medicine man then called his two big snakes, and when they came to him, he said: «You see the man, and the fee. Shall we help him? If you assent, go to him.» The snakes went to the poor victim, and much to his terror crawled all over him, and they even went so far as to lick his face. The patient called loudly for help, and even wept. The medicine man called for water, and sprinkled it on the patient, after he had blessed it, and he announced that the patient was cured.

754 791 Another reformed malignant medicine man, had such power over a certain bit of water that if a person fished in it without permission, some mishap would ever take him. The required permission would be given when the fisherman promised to give as a fee the first fish taken, and

13: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

THE SHILLUK'S BELIEF IN THE GOOD MEDICINE MEN.

BY REV. D. S. OYLER.

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756 The Shilluks think of the witch doctors or medicine men as good, not because their lives are good, nor yet because their practice is good, but because they are looked upon as the channels through which occult powers may be transmitted to men. Their powers are for sale, and man in his need may go to them for help. The patient, who brings no fee, will not be treated, as they do no charity work. In the contest between good and evil, they seem to typify the good, as combating the powers of the evil medicine man.

The people are not agreed as to the source whence the medicine [776] man receives his power. Some maintain that the power comes from God, and others, that it is a heritage from the man's ancestors but the difference is not great, as those, who think of the power as coming from the ancestors, would also say that the first person of the line having the power received it from God. A medicine man is usualy followed by one of his sons. The child to receive the power is designated by the father, and is usually either the oldest or yourgest son, though a daughter may also be possessed of the power to work charms. The occult power may also descend on the descendants of a son or a daughter of a medicine man, who did not inherit that power, and the fact that the power of working charms comes to a person whose father was not a witch doctor may be explained as a proof of the return of the power of some forgotten ancestor.

756 When a man begins the practice of the art the first ceremony 782 consists of a dedication prayer something like this: "You who are God, the power is yours. In order that I may save people, help [589] me. Father, and my ancestor, the power was yours, so help me. The fee is yours, father, it will be given by me to you, and God". So the first fee is dedicated to God or to the source of the power, as a sort of payment to obtain the power. The first fee is usually a female, either a lamb, kid or calf, though occasionally a male

[p. 110]

13: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

may be thus dedicated. The animal so devoted must be young. 756
Only the children of the medicine man may drink the milk of the 782
consecrated animal, and its offspring may not be sold, though that is sometimes violated. If the devoted animal is a cow the calves are kept until the man has enough to get a wife, and from the children of that wife his successor is chosen. When such an animal dies its meat is eaten, but annually a sacrifice of either an ox or sheep is offered for it, and the tail, feet, and head of the sacrifice are cut off, and hung on a pole. The successor to the devoted animal is chosen from among its offspring. When the devoted animal is a male it is not permitted to die a natural death, as that would bring disaster on the village. When the first fee is a sheep, the medicine man may later substitute a cow for it, if he becomes prosperous. If the son inherits a devoted animal from his father it is not necessary for him to devote his first fee thus to the source of his power.

When a witch doctor takes a case he practically always offers a prayer, and while they are different yet the thought in each is the same. One such prayer was given thus: "God you are the one, [539] who gives me the power. What power did I have before? I praise you, and may ancestor (Nikang), and Deng (who is worshipped by the Dinkas), and my father and mother. Is it not thus that you give me food?" The prayer may have many petitions, but practically the only reason given why it should be answered is, in order that the medicine man may get his food thereby.

The proof of the fact that the medicine man has the power he 755
covets is found in the cures he makes. If a witch doctor fails in 756
his first cases it is often taken as a proof that he does not have the power. However after a man has once established his reputation failure does not have such a serious effect on his practice.

Many of the medicine men have physical defects, and their child- 756
ren are usually sickly, and many of them are deformed. The [732]
natives say that this is caused by the fact that the shades of their victims bring a curse on the medicine man, and also on his family. The medicine man is usually well-to-do because of his exorbitant [556
charges, and he can afford to, and does, take many wives, but he 595]
usually only has a few children.

14: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

537 628 643 776 that its ancestors had also been owned by Dok, son of Nyikang. (That was added because the people of this district pay great honour to Dok.) The king added most seriously, "The flesh of this animal is as my flesh, and its blood is the same as my blood. Great disaster will come on you if you break the covenant, for you will be cursed by the blood."

537 628 648 The other chief men spoke. The Inspector inquired whether or not they were ready to abide by the promises they were making, and both sides declared they were.

628 643 782 Then the king called Akol saying "take the spear". The king then took the spear to be used from the hand of his follower, who had been carrying it. The spear was held up for the people to view, and they were informed that the person, who dared to break the oath would have the spear enter his body, even as the spear would later enter the body of the sacrifice.

628 782 The next ceremony was to pull the tail of the animal. Akol pulled for the Mainam faction, but one, who would have pulled for the Failo faction was rejected as being too young. Then one of their oldest men stepped out and pulled its tail. This act they looked [787] upon as an oath, that the men pulling the tail were to bear the blame if the peace should be broken. Disaster would come both to the man who pulled and his family, should his faction break the agreement.

Akol then rubbed the spear on the back of the animal, and then called for some one to give it the first thrust. A number who were called to do it refused because they were too young, and they feared the responsibility, because in case the feud should be renewed the man who shed the blood would be held guilty. Even then a chance was given to the people to refuse. They said, If you do not want peace, do not let the blood be spilled." A man was found to strike the animal. He gave it a serious wound. The animal walked toward [787] Failo. The people declared that the animal was showing that Failo was responsible for its death, that is Failo had been the original transgressor in the trouble. One young man from the Mainam faction said the decision was sure to be against Failo because the animal had been brought from Malakal with some cattle which were then in Failo, and the wounded animal was almost sure to turn back toward them. Then men from both factions speared it, and the animal fell.

14: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

After the animal fell the two factions moved closer together. The animal was then cut open, and some of the contents of the stomach was taken by the old men, and thrown on the young men. That was done to show their united condition. The thought was that the animal eats a bit here and there, but in the stomach it all becomes one mass. Even so the inviduals of the two factions were to become one. The two factions then united in singing the song of Dok. 628 782

To conclude the ceremony the men of the two factions started to march, and as they marched the two factions mingled until the onlookers could not tell to which faction the people belonged. The old chief was so happy that he leaped about, and danced like a boy. 628

The Inspector then gave some tobacco to the chief men: After that the meat of the animal was divided, and part taken by each faction. [648]

The meat was to be eaten in the villages, and the tobacco was to be smoked, and the people were to become one also through the eating, and smoking of the same thing. The formal ceremony was finished.

Before the people separated the king called a man, who had been under arrest for several months because he had taken part in the feud. The king said "When you see a man from the other village will you again curse him, and call to your friends to come on to slay him? The man said he would not. The king said "we heard of this man and his big words, but when we took him he was very small." He added that was often true of boastful men. 628 643

Both factions now profess to be glad that peace has been made, and declare that they intend to keep the peace.

Rev. D. S. OYLER.

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

When
821 the storm is very severe an offering must also be made. A hoe must
[782] be placed in front of the door. If no hoe is in the house then a fish spear, or something else made from iron, may be used instead. When a hoe or spear is thus offered it is taken back to the ordinary uses after the storm. In case they can find nothing of iron to offer, one of the inmates of the house takes a handful of dura and kneels in front of the door. He then turns back the door mat, and, reaching out, he casts the grain upward into the air.

Sometimes the lightning strikes (mal agoc, heaven hits). In
342 former times when a house was struck by lightning each house in the
821 circle had a rope tied around the apex of the cone-shaped roof. A bit of skin from the sacrificed sheep was supposed to be tied to each house. Then the houses were all connected by ropes running to these ropes. I have seen this arrangement only once. To the rope at the apex of the house old bones and snail shells are often tied. They are afraid to move the walls of the house that has been struck, and so the walls are pushed
[766] inward. If someone has been killed in the house the walls form a sort of earth covering, as he is not buried as other men. The custom in
[177] regard to electrical disturbances are changing. Many of the rites now practised are borrowed for the Dinkas, but seem to be well established at the present time.

According to the present usage, when a house is struck, the owner
342 usually calls a servant of Deṅ (Bāṅ Deṅ). After the servant of Deṅ
782 arrives he surveys the place and then exclaims, "Deṅ says bring an ox."
821 If the people are poor he may demand a sheep only. He usually adds, "I do not ask for this offering, but Deṅ asks for it." The offering is then brought, it is killed, cooked and eaten in the same place. After the meat has been eaten the bones are carefully collected, and a large branch from a higlig tree is stuck up on the site of the house. Then the bones of the sacrifice, with its horns and tail, are hung on this branch. Each guest partaking of the feast is supposed to offer an iron bracelet, and these bracelets are also hung on the higlig branch.

A person who has had a narrow escape from death by lightning
792 may become a servant of Deṅ (Bāṅ Deṅ), if he so desires. When they
821 travel they say, "Deṅ asks for this," and few people will refuse them when they beg in that way. In one case a person who dreamed he had been struck by lightning became a servant of Deṅ.

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

When someone has been stunned by lightning, the proper treatment is for two men to take the patient by the heels and, with his head hanging down, to dip his head in water. He is then taken from the water, but continues to hang head downward. After he has been held in this position for some time, snails and frogs will pour out of his mouth, and he will then be restored to health. One man assured me that he had once seen the frogs and snails come from a patient. 752 821

When a person is killed by lightning he is not buried as other men. If his death occurs in a house the walls are pushed down over him, and form his grave. If he is killed out in the open, each person in the village is supposed to bring a bit of earth and throw on him, and thus the grave is formed. It is thought that anyone who refuses to do that will be struck by lightning. 766 821

The person who is killed by lightning is not mourned as other people. The ox that is killed immediately after his death is looked upon as an offering to Deñ rather than as a sacrifice for the dead. The relatives are not to weep for them as they do for those taken by disease. The thought seems to be that the man who is struck by lightning is called by Deñ, and that it is an honour to be called by Deñ, and that weeping and lamenting over such a death would be dishonouring to Deñ. Death by lightning is looked upon as bad, but not as bad as death that comes through disease. The family of the deceased is supposed to be prospered. They feel that the family has made an offering to the higher powers, and they in turn should be blessed by the higher powers for the offering they have made. [782] 761 821

When a house is struck by lightning the war cry is given. The men all run to the river with the tips of their spears pointing upward. The spears are waved in imitation of the lightning. This is done so that Deñ will fear and return to the upper regions. Then they run to the boat landing where they throw their spears on the ground. Then each man cuts a bit of green grass. He carries this grass to the fire and throws it on the blaze. Occasionally, instead of running to the river in that manner, they run to the fire with their hands raised as if in supplication, and they give the war cry as they run. 789 821

A day or two after the fire, as soon as the walls are cooled, the people assemble. If no one has been killed in the house, a sheep is killed and cooked and beer is made. After the sheep is cooked, bits are cut from 342 782 821

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the liver, stomach, heart, tongue, upper lip, lower lip, and lungs. The walls of the house are then pushed down, and these bits are cast on the mound. They are to be thrown by a servant of Deń. The soup in which the meat was cooked is taken by the chief servant of Deń present, and the next in rank takes a gourd of beer, and they pour these upon the mound at the same time that the meat is thrown on it. The people then dance, while they sing a song of Deń. While the servants of Deń put the higlig branch (ȳk Deń) in place, the rest of the people run to the river to take a bath.

At the close of the rainy season the family of the person who has been struck by lightning invite the people of the village to drink beer. One gourd full of the beer is thrown into the air for Deń. This observance often becomes an annual event in the family. They think it helps to keep the lightning away.

A house is never built on the exact location of a house that has been struck by lightning, though another may be built near the place. An object that has been struck by lightning is sometimes worshipped. Sacrifices may be killed and eaten in front of it.

Many of these ceremonies are borrowed from the Dinkas. Deń is worshipped by the Dinkas; they are "Deń's people." He is the spirit of the rain, or the rain.

The rains at the beginning and close of the rainy season are very often accompanied by considerable electrical displays. It is small wonder that the natives behold in amazed terror the wonderful power of nature, and it is still less cause to marvel that they try to placate the powers of the storm. The westerner, with his scientific knowledge of electricity, is often awed by the gleam of the lightning and the crash of thunder, and it is not surprising that the uneducated native is even more awed by it.

Rites connected with the Dance Initiation.

The Shilluk lad looks forward with eagerness to the time when he will be permitted to join in the dances of his people. Not only does he long for the time because of the social pleasure, as dancing is the chief amusement of the people, but the right to dance carries with it other privileges.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

obvious variation on the second day, though different contingents took part. On each day, at the close of the ceremonies the drummers whisked the drums from their holes and rushed them out of the village. This was a signal to the dancers to disperse, and they did so with great speed and with mock terror. The spirit of the late *reth* was said to return on the drums being drawn, and hands were clapped by the onlookers as before. On the last day, the holes in which the drums had been set up were immediately filled, and water poured over the spot, and a sheep was brought to the site. This sheep was not immediately sacrificed, but was ceremonially purified and led off to be slaughtered elsewhere.

PART II—ELECTION OF THE RETH

(W.P.G.T.)

The *reth* of the Shilluk is elected from the body of surviving sons of those previous *reths* who have been properly installed in Fashoda. Difficulties arose in recent elections owing to pretenders seeking the throne, who were the sons of men who, although they were proclaimed *reth* by the government or compassed Fashoda of their own accord, had never been installed by Nyikang.

In 1943 these "illegitimate" lines had died out, and all *nyireths* were genuinely eligible for the position of *reth*.

Apart from the law that all *reths* must be the sons of previous *reths*, there is no other rule governing the election. It is more or less understood now, though not in former times, that surviving lines of *nyireths* take it in turn to provide a *reth*, though we think agreement has to be obtained for this. The families of three *reths*, Fafiti, Fadiet and Kur contained among them some thirty or forty *nyireths* all technically eligible for election excluding infant children of Fafiti. In 1943, the two surviving sons of *reth* Yor were not considered owing to old age (one of them had left the Shilluk country some years pre-

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

There were various dignitaries created *jagos* or chiefs responsible for separate small ceremonies. These had all to be appointed. They were old female *nyireths*, specially appointed, who looked after certain shrines of Nyikang. 643

An interesting ceremony was the lighting of the fire for the special blacksmiths, Kwanyikang from Golbainy, to make the sacred spears. It took place in the middle of January. A rough grass shelter was built on the clear ground east of Fashoda, and a white bull with brown markings was brought up for slaughter, and a black cow calf from the sacred herd of Nyikang. This was not for slaughtering, but was given to the Kwanyikang to take home. It and its offspring will remain the kine of Nyikang. A brown sheep is also brought. 643 782 372 326

Some little way off from the shelter the blacksmiths' implements, bellows, anvils, hammers etc., were brought out and laid upon a bull skin. When all was ready the implements were moved with great care to beside the shelter where they were laid out on the bull skin once more. Then the cow calf was completely draped in cloth, great care being taken to see that it was blind-folded. The bull calf and sheep were all tethered close to the shelter, and the spectators, including the *reth*, who took no part, stood round in a semicircle.

Two spears, sacred to Nyikang were brought down from the mound Aturwic, and a part of the sheep's right ear was cut off with one of the spears. This ear was said to assist the making of the fire. It was placed with some tinder upon a hearth beside the shelter, and the butt of a fish spear twirled and fire made. The sparks were nursed and taken into the shelter, where they were fanned into a fire. Then a piece was cut from the right ear of the bull, and put into a small gourd. A little bull's blood was also drained into the gourd. A blacksmith seized a hammer and hit the bull a blow on the base of the skull. The bull fell at once. Two more blows were delivered, and as it was about to die an incision was made in its throat with a spear, and the blood drawn off in gourds. The small gourd was said to be a libation to Nyikang, the large gourds full of blood were said 778 372

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 782 to be for the Kwanyikang to drink. The preliminaries were then complete for the forging of the spears to be used in the installation. They numbered about fifty.

778 643 [773] [775] The Shilluk say that Nyikang disappeared in a whirlwind, and since then Akurwa has been a place of especial sanctity. Nyikang is liable to re-appear at any time, in a variety of different forms and at any place in Shilluk country, but since Akurwa was the scene of his departure, it is also the most likely place for his return. There are many shrines of Nyikang in Shilluk country, but Akurwa is by far the most important and it is there that the effigies of Nyikang and Dak are kept. These effigies are not merely symbols. They may "become active" at any time, and when active they are Nyikang and Dak. The effigy of Nyikang is rarely taken on a journey in normal times, though it is often brought out to dance during religious festivals at Akurwa itself. The effigy of Dak makes periodical excursions through the country. Both effigies have an important part 643 775 778 to play in the ceremonies of installation. The soul of Nyikang is manifest in the effigy for the occasion, and he must march from Akurwa to Fashoda to test the qualities of his new successor and to install him at the capital. This march, the opposition shown by the *reth* and the final ritual performed at Fashoda are the essence of the installation ceremonies. The symbolic substitution on the sacred stools[13] of the *reth*-elect for the effigy is the principal method by which the soul of Nyikang is transferred.

The Progress of Nyikang from Akurwa to Nyigir.

643 778 As the time of the installation drew near, it was plain that there had been some delay. Nyikang was expected to arrive at Fashoda by the new moon of February 24th 1944. But as the old moon waned there were nothing but rumours that he had started and others that he had not. This was worrying to those around the *reth*, for tradition has it that if Nyikang disapproves of the *reth* he may become too heavy

13. Described in Part III, pp. 61 ff.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

touch the ground, but always rested on the foot of the bearer when he stopped[13]. These three men took their place at the head of the "bull procession", and started for Fashoda. 643 778

We were told that as soon as they reached Khor Arepejur in front of Fashoda they would send messengers back to our village of Adodo and others ahead to the village of Debalo, where the king-to-be-inducted was residing. Then when the messengers arrived at the respective villages the two processions would start simultaneously from the villages about equal distance from Fashoda to meet at Khor Arepejur for the final ceremony.

After the Golbany and the old men left, preparations were made for a sacrifice inside the enclosure in front of the houses where reside Nyikang and Dak. I noticed that no one passed these houses without bowing low and saying *Kwa dibong*, which in modern parlance would be "Your Honour". A small ram was brought, and then was killed by having its throat cut. This ceremony was attended by only a few of the people gathered in the village, and the others did not seem to pay much attention to it. A few minutes later, however, a female goat was brought and tied to the enclosure, on the outside, and all the men in the village gathered and sat on the ground in an attitude of utmost respect, every man with his feet under him and the backs of his hands touching the ground in front of him. Most of the people in the village were the custodians of Nyikang and Dak and had been accompanying them on the eight-day march from the village of Akurwa, which is the traditional home of these gods. None of these men carried spears, but all were armed with whips of Nyikang, which is rather a testimony that these gods do not need clubs and spears to protect them, but men armed as women are sufficient to overcome all opposition. There were about sixty men in the group from the village of Akurwa led by their chief. As the young female goat baa-ed, one of the old men in the group addressed it thus, "why do you cry, are you not

782 778 506 788 793

13. This was the practice with all sacred spears, and the images of Dak and Cal as well. Nyikang of course was never put on the ground.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

and over. The men beat alternately, and were accompanied by the people seated on the ground in front of them chanting together, "*Kwaa*, you are great, *Kwaa*, you are great." 533 643

A few minutes later young men brought out bundles of sticks and ropes called *ongero*, which had been brought from the Fanyikang district near Tonga.

At 9.15 a messenger appeared from Fashoda and the tempo of the drums was increased. Soon everyone in the village (including the women who had been keeping close to their houses) was seated in front of the houses. As the beat increased the people began to chant together "*Kwaa dibong, Kwaa dibong*", and to lean forwards and backwards. One man asked me why I did not place my hands on the ground and say "*Kwaa dibong*", and when I asked him if one should worship with the lips or with the heart, he quickly got the point, and said it was bad to worship only with the lips, for Nyikang would know. 643 Then four men appeared with baskets on their heads over which were spread small mats. On inquiry I was told that no one knew just what was in the baskets, but on later inquiry I discovered [778] they were the "things of Nyikang" such as his shoes, cloth, beads, food, and the like. At this point an old woman appeared from the house, and I was told she had been preparing Nyikang for the journey, and [793] she was called *nyakwer* (Note 13) or *nyibang Nyikang* (slave of Nyikang). It seems she is something of a priestess in that she takes care of Nyikang at the village of Akurwa and resides in the temple of Nyikang. She now led the people in song, a few words of which I was able to get, and [533 539] which were as follows:—"Open your mouth, Great One, and speak to us. Tell us what you are going to bring to us. Promise us the things we beg of you." This was repeated over and over with the old woman leading and the others following antiphonally.

The point behind the song is that these people of Akurwa are guardians of Nyikang, and they will not stir out of their village unless the new king promises them great riches. The new king had promised 643 782

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 782 so many cows, sheep, spears, etc., and now the people were thrusting themselves upon Nyikang to make sure these things would be delivered to them. They were begging Nyikang to speak to them and assure them that the things would be forthcoming. In all the ceremonies I witnessed the element of begging was paramount, the people begging Nyikang to speak to them and promise them "things of the [781] earth" to enrich them. The element of worship and adoration was singularly lacking. (Note 14).

643 778 After this song everyone turned their backs to the opening of the *kal* (enclosure), and the drums started to beat again. This time the people were silent, and soon Dak appeared and came out of the enclosure. Dak was about twelve feet high, carried on a long bamboo pole. The body of the figure was about eighteen inches long and approximately five inches thick, of a cylindrical shape wrapped about with blue and white checked cloth. It was crowned with a splendid plume of ten to dozen ostrich feathers, all black. Dak was carried by a middle aged man, and I was told that he would receive 'great riches' for his work, probably three or four cows. Dak circled the house three times and then came to rest again at the entrance. At [782] this time two sheep were sacrificed, one at the door of the *kal* and the other beside the road in the direction of Fashoda. These sheep were allowed to lie where their throats had been cut, but I noticed later that, as soon as the procession had passed, the women of the village went out and dragged them in to be eaten.

As Dak stood at the entrance, the drums changed their beat and everyone began to chant "*Kwaa*, you are great". Then Nyikang appeared out of the house and took his place beside Dak. He was carried by a man of middle age. Nyikang was much larger in body than Dak, though not nearly so tall. I estimated the body of the figure as being about five feet long and a foot thick. It was wrapped in the same cloth as Dak and crowned with a much more profuse plume of ostrich feathers. Two long streamers fell away from the head and

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

were as long as the body. Dak could rest on the ground[17] on the end of the bamboo pole, but Nyikang was never taken off the shoulder of the man carrying him.

As the procession started another sheep was sacrificed and the blood sprinkled on the ground in front of the marching men. Dak and Nyikang led side by side, with the two drummers taking their positions on each side and constantly beating the drums. The men with the six baskets came next, and then the men with bundles of sticks and ropes. Finally all the followers fell in behind.

The village was circled three times at a half trot, all keeping time with the drums, and then they started for Fashoda at 9.30 a.m. Relatively few people were in the procession as they started, but hundreds began to gather in from all sides until there were approximately six hundred followers when they reached the *kal wi jang* (place of calling together). Two hours were required for the procession to go two miles, for there was much dancing and singing, moving forward and again backwards, along the whole way. As the people danced along in rhythm to the drumbeat they also sang "open your mouth, Great One, and bring us your promises" or "open your mouth and answer our beggings." From time to time Dak would run out ahead as if to survey the road, and then come back to his place beside Nyikang. If the people crowded too close, Dak would run after them, and everyone would scatter as if the devil were after them.

On reaching a spot within half a mile of Fashoda the procession stopped and waited until messengers had gone to meet the king's party coming from Debalo. They brought back with them some cattle tethering ropes as tokens of the cows and bulls to be paid. One or two of these were refused by the elders who were gathered under a tree, and the messengers had to go back again. Finally all was arranged, and with much shouting and drum beating, the procession started for Fashoda to meet and fight with the followers of the approaching king.

17. We think that Dak never rested directly on the ground but on the bearer.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

who held his left, walked across the open space in front of the shrine. 643
Here another ox, this time a black and white one, also swathed in white cloth and covered over the back with a leopard-skin decorated at the edges with cowrie shells, was tethered. Beside it stood two men of Kwa Ojul, one holding a crude straight-bladed sword, the other holding a spear. These were said to be yet further weapons of Nyikang, [778 782]
and each in turn was handed to the *reth*, who stood at the tail end of the ox, and with each he made three passes in the air over the back of the ox, which was then led off to be sacrificed.

The Temporary Camp.

After this ceremony, the *reth*, still accompanied by the chief of Kwa Nyikwom and by the small girl *nyakwer*, entered the screen, which surrounded the temporary huts, and he himself entered the larger of them. These huts were built under the personal supervision [631]
of Jago Yor Leiker and Jago Tabo, the chiefs of the south and north. The huts were built of grass, and similar to those built in Shilluk cattle camps. The larger was considered the *reth's* temporary residence, the smaller the kitchen, where his food should be prepared and where the water was heated for the ritual bathing. The bull mentioned above was stripped of its coverings, which were again torn to pieces [782]
by the crowd, and the leopard skin was taken into the shrine of Nyikang. The bull was speared and fell to the ground immediately in front of the *reth's* temporary camp. After this the public part of the first day's ceremonies was over. The *reth* had retired into seclusion, and those Shilluk who had remained to watch the ceremony of the stool soon dispersed and went off to rest in the shade around Fashoda. Only the Ororo, Kwareth and Kwa Nyikwom, the immediate attendants of the *reth*, remained to guard him and minister to his wants.

The effigies of Nyikang and Dak had already been carried into the shrine. The drums were also put away, and the sacred stool, which had been carelessly left with the canopy draped over it, was carried off, the canopy held around it so that no one could see it go,

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

537 An untraditional but common topic was: "The Government
631 needs no introduction, you and it must co-operate; it is not like the
643 Dervishes or Turkia; you must help to collect its taxes."

644 The speeches opened with Jago Yor Leiker, the chief of Gol Nyikang, and Jago Tabo, the chief of Gol Dhiang, and finished with the chiefs of the marches Jago Ongwany of Mwomo and Jago Ding of Tonga. Each chief stuck the spear into the ground before the *reth* when his speech was ended, so that there remained a veritable forest of spears in front of the *reth* after the speech-making was over.

After Jago Ding's speech there was a short silence, after which the company started a chant to Nyikang and the *reth*. Then the *reth* got up and addressed his people, for now for the first time he was truly installed on the stool of Nyikang, and was fully become *reth*. "I have become your *reth*", he said, "and I will rule you and justify those who are aggrieved."

643 The assembly then arose, and the *reth* moved over to where the
782 white bull was tied. He made passes over its back with a spear, and retired. The Ororo came up, and after an abortive attempt which bent the spear, they stabbed the bull. The spears stuck in the ground were taken, some by Jago Yor Leiker, some by the men of Akwobai, who had gone to Kosti; and some by Kwa Wung.

643 After this came the final ceremony. The *reth*, accompanied
644 by a few chosen followers, was introduced to each house in Fashoda by the chief of Kwa Nyikang. There are many sites in the south east side of Fashoda where there used, in the days of *reth* Fadiet, to be houses, but Fashoda is smaller now. Tradition is strong however, and the *reth* was solemnly introduced to those sites, and told their names, and whose responsibility it was to rebuild them. When he came to the favourite house of his father *reth* Kur, a sheep was brought and prostrated before the door. The *reth* stepped over it and passed into the house, and the installation ceremonies were ended.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

PART IV.—SEQUEL.

Fertility Rites and Rain-Making.

(i) After his installation the *reth* took a day or two to recover, and we are told that about a week later, a hornless cow, the colour of a hippopotamus was sacrificed by the *reth* on the river bank. This was done to make the hippopotamus increase, and prosper the Shilluk hunters. 643 789 782

(ii) There was a slight hitch over the rain-making ceremony, which we are informed by Mr. L. W. A. Raven, takes place in the early rains each year. The *reth* is said to slaughter a bull the colour of the rain clouds. We asked the *reth* about this, and he said "Oh, it has been done at Fanyikang already by the chief of Kwa Nyikang." Resulting from this departure from custom, after only light showers, one on the last day of the installation, the rains were late, and by the end of June the *reth* was worried. The sequel is interesting. An old woman of Lemmo section dreamed of the departed *reth*. This showed that his spirit had not been laid to rest properly, and had not the Funeral Dance been cut short by two days? So another and smaller funeral dance of two days duration was held on the 2nd. and 3rd. July, at the same village of Pareth Fafiti. A few days later it started to pour with rain, and continued, so that it was for the Shilluk a year of plenty. 643 789 787 766

POSTSCRIPT

(W.P.G.T.)

On 6th, April I visited Fashoda on business. Three days previously the *reth* had told me in a matter of fact way that he was going to finish off the party from Akurwa, and give them their dues, and then "they could do as they pleased, but he, the *reth*, was finished with them." Their dues were 10 head of cattle. By the 6th. I fancied this would all be over, however as I approached I met about six men carrying hides and about ten women carrying household utensils 643

22: Howell E-5 (1951) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

766 [782] The *ororo* then went to fetch the body from Debwor. The remains were put in a special bag made from the hide of a cow-calf sacrificed for the occasion and wrapped in white cloth and the party set out for Kujo, travelling by night and with an advance guard who were entitled to seize small gifts and ransoms from those unfortunate enough to cross their path.[1]

[782] On the arrival of the party at Kujo an ox was sacrificed as *akadh* (a sacrifice to allow them to enter the village) and the remains of *reth* Dak were brought into the *gol dwong*, by now transformed into his *kengo*. The grave was then dug inside one of the two huts[2] and on the second day *heglig* wood (*Balanites aegyptica*) was cut and a new bier (*pam*) was constructed, bound with leather thongs taken from the hide of the ox sacrificed as *akadh*. On this the remains were placed, lowered into the grave and buried. Immediately [533] afterwards the chief (*jago*) of the *ororo* came out singing the song of Nyikang which is the usual signal for the start of public ceremonies and the song was taken up by those outside. On this occasion the crowd proceeded to the river [783 787] to bathe themselves. Apparently the spirit of the *reth* himself had appeared to one of the *bangreth* in a dream and had demanded that this untraditional rite of purification should take place.[3] After this the duties of the *ororo* were completed and the *kwa* Nyikir took over. *kwa* Nyikir come from Fadong north of Fashoda and are specifically concerned with the funeral dances of Shilluk *reths*[4]

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[1] Fr. Hurst informs me that they travelled fast but not for long distances. They rested for the day at some village where a bull was sacrificed. Only a small party [782] travelled with the *reth's* remains and it was noticeable that the people kept out of the way. At every large watercourse a sheep was sacrificed, again called *akadh*. The word is derived from the verb *kadho*, "to cross over."

[2] I was not present at Kujo until later, and had I been there, I should not have been allowed to witness the actual burial. The procedure was described to me later and I can only give the bare outline of what happened. I was informed that the grave is of the usual Shilluk pattern—a straight slit-trench with a side chamber below, in which the body is placed lying full length on the right side.

[3] I was unable to discover where this idea originated and whether it had any special [177] significance. I suspect Christian associations since *reth* Dak had been educated for three years at the elementary school at Doleib Hill (American Presbyterian Mission) and had retained links with them.

[4] Nyikir. "Children of the Nile (Kir)." Tradition relates that these people are [173] not Shilluk in origin but were found by Nyikang at a place called Podho Ngu ("the lion country"). Nyikang was attracted by their drumming. On Nyikang's approach they fled into the river where Nyikang captured them and made them his drummers, their specific duty being to beat the drums at the funeral wakes of all subsequent *reths*. I am indebted to Mr. J. L. Baker for this information.

Just before dawn they set up the four royal drums on end in holes specially dug in the ground[2] and in the centre of the village opposite the *kengo*. They were beaten for a short while as a signal that the public ceremonies of mourning would begin that day. In addition a fire was lit using fire sticks (*pic mac*), an important ritual item in any Shilluk ceremony, and a sheep was sacrificed.

I reached Kujo that afternoon just in time to see the *kwa* Nyikir enter the village again, singing as they came and carrying the spear of Nyikang wrapped in white cloth and also a basket which I was told contained certain sacred relics including the bell or Nyikang (*orok Nyikang*). The party stepped over a sheep held to the ground in front of them[1] and then took up their position round the drums.

Meanwhile an ox had been tethered near to the drums and a Shilluk warrior stood by, spear in hand. At a given signal he plunged his spear into the ox, missing the heart, and causing only a slight wound in the haunch, with the result that it broke away and had to be despatched outside the village. No particular attention was paid to this unfortunate incident which might have been regarded as an ill omen, and immediately the drums began to beat, the *kwa* Nyikir skipping round them four times and again stepping on to and over a sheep tethered to the ground. The main body of spectators consisting of important persons and the occupants of Kujo and neighbouring villages then entered the arena. These people carrying millet stalks, sticks and swords, but no spears, danced round the drums in an anti-clockwise direction singing the song of Nyikang followed by that of *reth* Dak Nyikang and finally a new song composed in honour of the deceased. After several minutes of dancing in this manner, the crowd moved forward and knelt facing the shrine clapping their hands as a sign of grief. These royal mourning songs reflect the Shilluks' attitude towards their kings. *Agwet wad Nyidhongo piny apath cie Yor wad Nyidhongo labo arieny*, "Agwet wad Nyidhongo, the earth is

[2] These holes are specially dug beforehand and bells and other sacred objects put beneath the drums. For normal social events Shilluk drums are laid horizontally or lean against supports set in the ground.

[1] The significance of this act is not clear and Shilluk merely say that it must be done; it is "according to custom," *kwong*. I have, however, frequently heard it said that the act, *ahadh*, is intended to remove impurities which might be harmful to the *reth*. The procedure is followed in all sorts of ritual situations in which the *reth* is concerned. It will be remembered that the *reth* steps over a bull-calf when he leaves Debalo and over a black bull at Arepejur on his way to Fashoda on the first day of the installation ceremonies. It will also be remembered that in the old days, prior to *reth* Fadiet, a man (and a girl) was subjected to the same treatment as the bulls and sheep, and, though it is not true that he invariably died in the process, he was never allowed to come into direct contact with the *reth*. See Howell and Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 54 and p. 79, Note 21.

24: Howell E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

In the meantime, I had driven along the road until, about two miles north of Fashoda, I met Nyikang, Dak and their followers moving at great speed towards the capital. I followed them for a while and then took up a good position immediately west of Fashoda in the open grass where I knew the opposing forces would meet. Nyikang soon arrived and halted, drums beating and the shield-bearer dancing forward in defiance of the *reth* and his army who were by then appearing over the crest of the northern bank of Arepejur. The *kwa* Nyikwom, armed with whips, then dashed forward and those armed with millet stalks met in a disorderly and not very spectacular clash well to the west of the main party. Then, as the *reth* and his personal guards drew near, Nyikang and Dak rushed up to him, surrounded him and bore him off towards Fashoda, while a furious battle took place between the opposing forces, the *kwa* Nyikwom lashing out with their whips without mercy.

Outside the shrine, which had been beautifully cleaned and decorated for the occasion, the royal stool (*kwom*), wrapped in white cloth, was ready. As Nyikang and his captive drew near, the white canopy was thrown around them. It was therefore not easy to see what happened, and it would have been unseemly to push behind the screen, but it was clear that the substitution had taken place a few minutes later when Nyikang withdrew into the shrine.

A short time afterwards, the *reth's* feet were bathed and he was carried to the temporary camp opposite. He emerged again almost immediately to make passes over the bull, covered in white cloth and a leopard-skin, with the traditional weapons handed to him for the purpose, and then entered *Adul* once more, while the beast was sacrificed, falling on its side about fifty yards away. The man responsible for spearing it" was seen running rapidly towards the river where he must wash the blood from the blade and purify himself in the water. A fire was then lit inside one of the two small huts in the camp and water was heated in which the *reth* was bathed."

This ended the first day of the installation. The *reth* was safely in seclusion within *Adul*, and although not free from danger yet, had successfully passed one of the most dangerous periods of the whole procedure. The only other ceremony performed that day was the lighting of fire outside the camp

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[a] From the *kwa* Nyiboc of Limo.

[b] In conversation with Shilluk after the event, I was informed that during his stay at *Adul*, the temporary camp, the *reth* is expected to have sexual intercourse with one of his half-sisters. The custom (*kwong*) is said to derive from Dak, who, infuriated by Nyikang's action in giving his mother, Akec, to Cal (or Burro, another brother), took one of his half-sisters who eventually gave birth to Ocolo. Nyikang was apparently outraged by this action, but decreed that thereafter every *reth* should take one of his half-sisters. This story is recorded by Hofmayr (see Bibliography), but I had not realised that the act—a ritual breach of the rules of exogamy and called *ahwalo*—actually takes place. It is also said that members of the *kwareth* have to do likewise when they are appointed chiefs (*jago*) though it is admitted that the woman is usually a more remote kinswoman than a half-sister. The act is none the less one of incest. The matter needs further investigation.

24: Howell E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

537 643 *Jago* Yorleiker, the chief of Gol Nyikang, rose to make the first speech, carrying a spear in his hand. A delay occurred as the *reth's* drummer was missing and had to be found. Then *jago* Yorleiker, followed by *jago* Thabo of Golbainy and titular chief of Gol Dhiang, and other chiefs in order of precedence came forward to address the *reth* on his installation. Nearly all carried presentation spears which were thrust into the ground in front of the *reth*, though one or two, as in the case of *kwanyireth* Akwei Anyong of Detwok, placed a bead on the ground. The speeches were on the whole short, and took the form of exhortations to the *reth* to emulate his father's example and to work closely with the Government; to pay attention to his elder advisers; to visit all the Shilluk lands and to avoid favouritism; to deal fairly with the Shilluk. As each speaker finished he was applauded by the rattling of Nyikang's shield and the beating of the drum, for longer or shorter periods according to the quality, or perhaps, acceptability, of the speech. Those who were most honoured were accompanied back to their place by the shield-bearer before the latter turned to signal out the next speaker. Last of all the chiefs to speak were *jago* Ongwany *wad* Kak and *jago* Kwathi *wad* Kudjok of Tonga, the traditional wardens of the Shilluk Marches at the northern and southern extremities of their country.

Finally the *reth* rose to speak. He walked forward to where rows of spears had been stuck in the ground and there, amid reverent interjections of *wuo* from the assembled Shilluk, he harangued the chiefs for their failure to produce the cattle of the late *reth* which were his just due.[1]

As he spoke he paced backwards and forwards along the lines of spears, evoking grudging grunts of agreement to his apparently rhetorical questions. Having delivered his speech, he stepped back, took hold of the ceremonial sword and made passes over the back of the white bull with a black face which had been tethered on his right. A Shilluk then speared the bull, again with considerable lack of skill, and the *reth* departed on his tour of the royal houses of Fashoda. A slight altercation broke out over who was to have which spears presented by the Chiefs, but the installation of *reth* Kur *wad* Fafiti, the thirty-second *reth* of the Shilluk, was over.

[1] As explained in a previous article (*S.N. & R.*, Vol. 33, Part 1) the immediate and personal heirs of the late *reth* had attempted to conceal many of the cattle which are royal property and should go to his successor.

27: Munro U-5 (1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Observation here was very difficult owing to the curtain, the moving crowd, and the fact that the Ret's most ancient wife would keep on dancing in front of the only possible view.

I therefore moved my position to where I noticed some ancient cronies, who were past the age of reverence and merely inquisitive, and from which place one could see behind the curtain. Shortly after I had moved the Ret's wazir was called for : he was Yomon wad Ker (Kwaniuret). Nyakang was then withdrawn by his attendant backwards and the Ret took his seat on the sacred stool. His wazir then grasped the two front feet of the stool presumably in token of the submission and fealty of the Shilluk race, and in recognition that Nyakang's mantle had descended upon him.

Then occurs much tomtoming and dancing, in which the people concerned are wives of the Ret and people of Akurwa, while the Ret sat like a graven image on the chair. At this time I noticed smoke issuing from the temporary tukls and asked what it was for. I was informed that the Ret's wives were warming water for the ablutions. Presently when this was ready two or three of them came and washed the new Ret's feet in hot and cold water, the significance of which is that the Ret shall be neither too cold nor too hot with his people, i. e. just.

The Ret was then lifted up by the Ororo and carried to where a bull covered with a leopard skin had been brought by Kwa Ujalu[1] on the threshold of his « temporary hut ». He appeared to make certain passes, four in number, over this with a large sword, which was handed to him. The bull was then speared and carried away struggling for a short distance, and the Ret was then taken to his hut, which ended the proceedings temporarily. As we left the scene, the sacred stool was carried past us by four men running and taken up to the Ret's palace on the mound.

I was told Fafiti was to stay in his temporary hut for three days, and at the end of that period is taken up to his palace.

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[1] Kwa Ujalu is probably identical with Kwa Ajal, who were founded by Jal. They live at Nyel Wak and lay out the circle for building the house of Nyakang (cp. Westermann, p. 128 clan list compiled by Rev. D. Oyler of Doleib Hill). Local tradition says they have the right given them by Nyakang of taking captives any girls they may meet and holding them to ransom.

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

NIKAWNG'S PLACE
IN THE SHILLUK RELIGION

BY REV. D. S. OYLER.

The Shilluks being without a written language have lacked the means to collect and verify their religious beliefs. When asked as to their beliefs, they refer to the old men, who have given them the traditions. Defects of memory, different sources of information, and the personal beliefs, and desires of the narrator, tend to give a diversity of belief.

The Shilluks profess belief in a Supreme Being. He is greater than Nikawng or any other king. He is the Creator of the world, but he is far distant. They are not able to come into close contact with him, and feeling that he is far beyond their reach, and dismayed by the disasters, which come to them apparently from the hand of God, they feel the need of some one to stand between them and God. Nikawng is the chief intermediary, though others stand between them and God, either for good or evil. The distance of the Creator, and the nearness of the intercessor often tends to give him the greater power and influence.

They never pray to God without invoking an intercessor. A typical prayer in which Nikawng is invoked with God can be given.

« We praise you, you who are God. Protect us, we are in your hands, and protect us, save me. You and Nikawng you are the ones, who created, people are in your hands, and it is you Nikawng, who are accustomed to assist God to save, and it is you who give the rain. The sun is yours, and the sea (river) is yours, you who are Nikawng. You came from under the sun, you and your father, you two saved the earth, and your son Dok, you subdued all the peoples. The cow (for sacrifice) is here for you, and the blood will go to God and you. Now hear all of you, you the people of the earth, and save us. The person who rejects your talk will die. »

This veneration of Nikawng may possibly be a bit of ancestor worship,

[p. 283]

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

for they occasionally pray to their ancestors in the same way, and also to the dead chief of the village. The chief is looked upon as a father. Infrequently they pray to the spirit of some departed friend. When a person has a pleasant dream about a departed friend, a prayer is frequently addressed to his spirit, as he is well disposed. The mother, brothers and sisters may also be invoked.

When prayer is to be offered to the spirit of a dead person, a female sheep is brought to the grave. If the person making the prayer is not the son of the deceased, the right ear is cut from the sheep, and tied to the ankle of the person making the offering, and the wounded ear is washed in a gourd of water, so that the blood remains in the water, and then the water is poured on the grave, and part of it is thrown in the eye of the sun (that is thrown out in front of the sun). It is for God so that it will go to him. The sheep becomes the property of the heir of the deceased. The prayer is offered before the ear is cut off. If the son offers, prayer is made to God and to the deceased, and then the sheep is killed as soon as the signs are right. The sheep is cut open, and the contents of the stomach and bowels are thrown on the house of the offerer, and then the meat is cooked. The meat can not be tasted until the oldest living wife of the deceased takes some of the soup in a small gourd, which is covered with a small native mat, and pours it on the grave. The soup that remains in the gourd is poured out in front of the house. The old men are then called to take the lead in eating the sacrifice. Women of all ages may eat of the sacrifice, but only the boys and old men of the males may eat, as no man of military age may eat of it. When the feast is finished the bones are carefully collected, and thrown into the river, as it would be bad if the bones of a devoted sheep should be gnawed by a dog.

While there is no set form for the prayer, and its length is determined by the sheep, yet they are all very similar, and the following is an example.

"We praise you, you, who are God, it was you, who gave me my father, who begot me. I pray to you also my father. Why did you go to the earth, and keep silence? Was not this your house before? When evil comes to your house, why do you not pray to God? Your house is given as a plaything to the people. You went to the presence of God, and we thought that nothing evil would befall us again, after you left. Now help,

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

God. Why do you leave the responsibility of saying on God alone? God's spirit becomes tired (from work), and he leaves people, and they die. Why do you not see and save us? You went to the ground, and you have forgotten that a person from another house does not guard yours.»

The prayer is continued in this strain until the sheep, responding to the necessity of nature, relieves itself, and that is taken as an omen that the prayer has been heard, and a favourable answer will be given. That which comes from the sheep is put on the grave. If the omen is delayed, the sheep may be taken to a house, and left there to be brought out another day. The prayer life among the Shilluks is developed by adversity, as they seldom if ever pray, when in prosperous circumstances.

Their veneration of Nikawng does not blind their eyes to his faults. When a prayer has been offered to Nikawng, and the answer is not given as had been hoped, the disappointed one curses Nikawng. That is true especially in the case of death. When death is approaching, they sacrifice to Nikawng and God, and pray that death may be averted. If the death occurs the bereaved ones curse Nikawng, because he did not exert himself in their behalf. Apparently they do not pray to him that the condition of the deceased may be happy after death. He is sometimes spoken of as the son of God, but it is not definite, as they also use the same term in regard to his father, and one or two others.

They maintain that Nikawng still lives. He is even now watching over the Shilluks, and should he die the whole race would die, but in spite of their belief they have a sacred house for Nikawng, which is similar to the sacred houses in which the later kings have been buried. This fact weakens their statement that they believe that he still lives.

The departed leader comes back to his country on certain occasions. At night he can be heard in the sacred house, which has been dedicated to him. He sharpens his spear, or beats with his club, but when the attendants enter the house, no visible form is to be seen, but they know that the sounds were made by him. He may also ring a bell that is in the sacred house. When he is heard in the sacred house, the Shilluks say: «Nikawng walks in his country». They rejoice because it is an indication that he is actively watching over his people.

When the rains do not begin as soon as the natives think they should,

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the chief of the district offers a sacrifice to Nikawng so that the rains may come. After the prayer has been offered, and the rain comes, if it comes with a rushing sound they say that Nikawng walks in the storm, and the rushing sound is made by his passing.

Once the departed king returned so that he could be seen by the eye of man. The first kings did not die, but ascended. At last a time came when the kings were to be identified more fully with the people, and they were to be buried. The proper burial of the first king to receive that attention from his subjects, was of such great importance that Nikawng returned to give minute instructions as to how the king should be buried. Some say that he actually appeared in the flesh. Others say that he appeared to a certain old chief in a dream, and made known to him how one of his kingly descendants should be buried.

At certain times the old woman, who has charge of his sacred house places food in it for him. At the time of new moon the food is placed in his house, and may be offered to him one day, or four days. Very early in the morning the food is taken out, and eaten by the attendants. They say that Nikawng has tasted it. Should the offering entirely disappear in the night it would be taken as a serious omen. Milk is also placed in the house with the food. Should the old woman keeper of the sacred house dream of the king during the month, she places an offering of food in his house.

Similar offerings are made to the other kings, and also they may be made to an ancestor.

When the harvest is beginning, before the people may eat of their grain they must take an offering of their first fruits to Nikawng. After Nikawng has been given his taste of the first fruits the people may eat freely. An offering of the first fruits is also taken to each of the sacred houses of the other kings.

Many of them take an offering of the first fruits to the grave of an ancestor, usually the father. When offering to a father the grain is made into a sort of batter, and poured out on the grave. The man then says that he has given his father a taste. The worship at the family shrine dies out when the immediate family is all gone. In the case of the kings it is kept by all the people.

The power of Nikawng is upheld to some extent by a class of religious

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

755 to keep the disease from entering. The mother is warned against looking back.

[753] When a child cries persistently, with no apparent cause, they reach the conclusion that he is being drawn by one of the kings. The servant of the [754] king is called, and given a fee of a sheep. The parents say they want to know, who is drawing the child. The first thing to do is to take cowrie shells, and string beads on them. Each shell has a different coloured bead. The shells are named for their kings, and also for the deceased grandparents of the child. One shell is also put in for the child. The shells are [787] all taken in the hand, and thrown out on a skin. When they fall if another shell touches that belonging to the child, it is being drawn by the spirit of that king or person. The child is then given the name of the person [553] drawing it, and a cure is effected. If at the first attempt no one is indicated the test is repeated until some one is indicated. All the people in the room [782] then cower, and pray to the drawing spirit as the leader directs.

The servants of the king claim the power to converse with the dead. 756 When a spirit is to be called the medium goes into the house with the 787 relatives. She goes to one corner of the room and retires behind a screen. The door is closed to make the room dark. She then takes a gourd with some grain in it and twirls it to make a noise that will call the spirit of the departed. The spirit of the king then takes powerful possession of the medium, and she speaks in a peculiar voice. The usual thing is for the spirit to greet the assembled people, and they reply. The spirit then says: «Where I am it is nice, but I was killed by a certain person (naming him) [761] or I would not have died.» The death was caused by a charm cast on the victim. «I will kill that man, do not quarrel with him. When I finish greeting you I will return.» Sometimes such a message causes the relatives [682] of the deceased to try to kill the one who cast the charm.

An instance of their working is often given in this community. Two 756 men made a trip to the Nuer country. On the return trip one of them, 766 named Shol, was separated from his companion. The other man concluded 787 that he had been killed by a lion, and returned with that report. The people of the village mourned him as dead, but they waited two months. Then a servant of the king was called. She went through the usual forms, and then exclaimed: «Ah the man». The spirit greeted the people, and

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

The body of the dead king, wrapped in a white cloth, lies in state in his capital of Fashoda. During the course of the second night it is taken secretly to a nearby village for temporary interment, for by tradition the body is not to be buried for about a year after the death of the king, but is placed in a hut which is sealed up. Traditionally, too, the youngest of his wives should be sealed up alive with him, and the hut allowed to fall into ruins and thus form a tomb for them, but happily this dreadful custom is no longer practised.

After an interval of about a year, the remains of the dead king are removed from their temporary resting place and taken, again by night and with secrecy, to his own village where they are buried in a grave dug in the floor of a hut. This is a signal for the people from all over the country to come in for the funeral dances. The number of people who attend the dances is indicative of the popularity that the late king enjoyed among his subjects, and so too is the number of cattle sacrificed. This may run into several hundreds, some of which are contributed by the family of the deceased, but most being the tribute of chiefs and people. The meat of the slaughtered animals is distributed among those taking part in the funeral ceremonies.

Two or three days after the king has been buried, on a day appointed, the warriors armed with spears and war shields and in well-ordered companies, each headed by a flag bearer and marshalled according to the district from which they come, encircle the outside of the village, singing songs in praise of Nyikang and the late king. They then enter the village and dance round the drums and the tomb, stopping at a concerted signal to kneel in homage to the dead, facing the tomb, clashing spear on shield and addressing funeral chants to the king. Once more they encircle the village, this time on the inside, visiting each of the late king's huts in turn, some stepping out of the ranks and peering into the empty huts as though searching for the king and then retiring to give place to the next contingent. Thus the funeral ceremonies continue for two or three days, but

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 796 it was an old man who was stretched across the path for the king and his followers to step across. With such a large following, there was more stepping on, than stepping across, and the man was trampled to death.) His partisans follow suit and the whole army crosses the watercourse and marches towards Fashoda. As it does so, the supporters of Nyikang, bearing the two effigies in their midst, are seen approaching from Adodo. The two forces halt a short distance apart, threats are shouted, weapons are brandished—not spears, fortunately, but millet stalks—there is the usual preliminary feinting and dodging and half-hearted rushes, and then the two armies hurl themselves forward and join in the great mock battle. The air is thick with dust raised by the padding feet of the combatants and clouded with flying millet stalks. When the air clears it is seen that the reth is no longer at the head of his forces. His army has been defeated and he has been captured by Nyikang and carried into Fashoda.

Nyikang, closely followed by the reth, advances to an open [782] space in front of the shrine. A cow is sacrificed and then a [778] screen of white cloth is erected in front of the doorway of the shrine, and the sacred stool of Nyikang is placed behind it so as to be hidden from the public view. The effigy of Nyikang is put down upon the stool and a period of chanting and invocation ensues, the reth meanwhile kneeling and clasping the legs of the stool. Then Nyikang is lifted up and carried into the shrine and the reth takes his place on the stool. This is the solemn moment of the installation; it is the equivalent of the crown of kingship being placed on the head of the monarch. The Shilluk believe that at this moment the [787] spirit of Nyikang enters into and takes possession of the body of the reth. After some time spent in communing with Nyikang, the reth, accompanied by his 'bride', who during all this time has never left his side, leaves the place of installation and moves across to a group of huts temporarily erected for [782] his use. Another cow is sacrificed and the king enters one of [783] the huts for the ritual washing of his feet by his wives. This bathing is done in hot and cold water and signifies that the

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 796 himself a worthy successor of his great ancestor; Nyikang reappears and goes back to his shrine where he remains until he returns to Akurua.

The concluding ceremonies take place the following day when the chiefs from all over the country gather to do fealty to their new king. The king, seated on the sacred stool of Nyikang, faces the assembled chiefs. Each one comes forward [537] in turn carrying a spear. He makes a speech of praise and exhortation, and at the conclusion drives his spear into the ground to signify that he will never raise it against the king. The king replies briefly to the gathering, thanking the chiefs for their protestations of loyalty and promising to rule justly. [782] After the assembly a bull is sacrificed, and the reth makes a tour of inspection of Fashoda. He pauses outside his father's house, a sheep is stretched out before the threshold, he steps over it and disappears into the interior. He has come into his own.

All over the country there is a general feeling of buoyancy and relief. The shadow is lifted from the land. Nyikang is among his people again . . . long live the king!

643 797 Perhaps I may be pardoned if to this account of the position, the installation and death of the reth, I add a few words on the death of one of the recent kings, Papiti, because of the interest it has for our mission and its work. Papiti must be one of the longest lived of Shilluk kings. The twenty-ninth in succession from Nyikang, he was the son of Yor who had been hanged by the Mahdists in Kodok. He was elected king in 1917, and died in 1943; thus his reign extended over a period of twenty-six years.

From the time of the accession of King Papiti dates the prosperity of the Catholic missions in the Shilluk country, or [798] at least dates the time when they ceased to suffer persecution at the hands of the Shilluk and were permitted to live and do their work in peace, for Papiti had always shown himself a firm friend of the missionaries. He was a frequent visitor to the mission at Lul and often sent presents of hippopotamus fat, a rare delicacy, and butter. It was his authority and good

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Chapter VIII

RELIGION

It is so easy to suppose, when speaking of the peoples who live in the continent of Africa as pagan, that they are without any religion at all and have no knowledge or recognition of God. Yet it is absolutely untrue of them all. Certainly among the Shilluk people there is not one, no matter how remote from Christian influence, who would not willingly subscribe to the first article of the Creed: 'I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.' He does indeed believe in God, the Supreme Omnipotent Spirit, Creator of all things, Lord of life and death, the great Jwok-Atang. I once commenced instructing a dying Shilluk chief by asking him 'Do you believe in God?' He looked at me in wonder that I should ask so foolish a question, and replied 'Of course I do. All men believe in God.' And undoubtedly, to the Shilluk, God is very real. On entering a village, you are greeted in His name, '*Yi kall yi Jwok*,' i.e. 'God has brought you.' As you leave you are sped on your way with a prayer, '*Yi mith yi Jwok*.' 'May God guard you.' A person looking very seedy and sorry for himself will come and tell you that 'he has God', by which you immediately understand not that he has experienced a sudden religious conversion, but that he is sick. So too, good fortune and misfortune both are attributed to God, and of the latter, even the most crushing ones, the failure of the crops, the decimation of the cattle through plague, the death of a loved one through sickness or accident, although grieved over, are accepted resignedly as coming from God.

Yet here there is a great paradox, for although God is acknowledged by the Shilluk as the Lord of all things, and His name is so frequently invoked, yet He is not worshipped by the people and to Him no prayer or sacrifice is offered.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

776 God is considered as being far off, aloof from mankind, caring nothing for the things He has created. Men do not then approach Him directly, nor, at least on great public [782] occasions, presume to offer sacrifice to Him. Approach to God can only be made through the great mediator, Nyikang. It is Nyikang who, though he led his people into and left them in so sorry a plight, is reverenced as the Father and Saviour of the Shilluk people, is worshipped as a demi- [775] god, and is thought of as always dwelling among them in [782] the person of the reigning king. To him are all prayers made and sacrifices offered; in his honour sacred dances are [778] performed. His numerous shrines, located in different parts of the country in which his spirit is believed to dwell, are [793] carefully tended by the Bang Reth, to whom fall the perquisites of the meat of the sacrifices and the tributes of grain willingly surrendered from a meagre harvest in the sacred name of Nyikang.

776 The king, as the personification, as it were, of Nyikang 643 on earth, will offer the principal sacrifices on important 782 occasions during the year, for example, to obtain a plentiful [789] rainfall and a bumper harvest, for the averting of the plague [731] of weaver birds which descend on the country in their millions each year and devour the ripening grain, in times of drought and flood, of epidemic among the people and plague which is carrying off the cattle. On these and similar occasions is Nyikang invoked and sacrifice offered to him by [634] the king himself and the district chiefs, and yet it is clearly understood by all that it is not Nyikang himself who will bestow the benefit or avert the disaster, but God, moved to clemency by the intercession of Nyikang for his people. And so the second and last article of the Shilluk Creed would run 'and in Nyikang, Son of God, Father of the Shilluk people, and our only intercessor with God for us'.

775 Alongside the cult of Nyikang, there is also a cult of the 769 dead. The Shilluk have only a vague notion of life after death in the Christian sense. They do, indeed, speak of the *Pa Jwok*, God's country, which is the abode of Nyikang and their ancestors, and which is reached only after months of

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

difficult and weary travel, but they are hazy as to what kind of life is led in that country and suppose it to be but a continuation of the kind of life they know on this earth. Meanwhile the spirits which have not yet started on the journey to Pa Jwok hover round their graves and former homesteads and may do harm to their living relations, and a person who has died in enmity with anyone is greatly to be feared by his late enemy. All these spirits, therefore, have to be placated by offerings and sacrifices. Someone may be taken ill, and the anxious relatives call in the witch doctor to tell them which spirit is responsible for bringing this evil upon them. He consults his oracle, such as an empty calabash to which he listens intently, and then informs the people that Nyikang says such-and-such a one, recently dead, is responsible and that sacrifice and prayer must be offered to his spirit, and perhaps intercession and sacrifice is to be made at the grave of the sick person's dead father, that his spirit may prevail upon the malignant one to remove the curse from his family. Accordingly a sheep is led to the grave of the person to be placated. The right ear is cut off and washed in water and the water poured over the grave. Prayer is made both to God, Jwok-Atang (on such private occasions as this without the intercession of Nyikang), and to the dead person. Then the sheep is killed and the meat cooked. Some of the soup is poured over the grave and the meat is then eaten by those who have taken part in the sacrifice.

All former kings, and in some cases great chiefs, have their shrines. These shrines consist of two or three huts built in the usual Shilluk fashion but with much better thatching than that affected by the ordinary Shilluk and enclosed within a reed or thorn fence. As befitting the great spirit that dwells within, these shrines are kept in good repair and spotlessly clean by the duly appointed guardians. One such shrine is situated just a few hundred yards from the mission at Detwok. It consists of two large huts surrounded by a fence and is dedicated to Nyala, a woman, surprisingly enough. She was the daughter of the seventeenth

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

778 king, Kudit, and during her father's reign assisted him by
776 her very able administration of the northern province of the kingdom. She continued in this office until her death which took place during the reign of Kudit's successor, Aney. To
[731] this shrine in times of severe drought, or on the occasion of
[782] some other such public misfortune, comes the whole populace of the district to dance and sing and pray before it, to offer its tithes of grain, and to slay and sacrifice a bull to the spirit of Nyala.

793 The Shilluk do not possess a priesthood in the sense of a
782 body of men dedicated to offer sacrifice; sacrifice may be offered publicly by the king or the chief of a district, or privately by any individual. There are, however, individuals
756 who claim to have supernatural powers, to be possessed by
754 Nyikang and to be the interpreters of his wishes, to foretell the future, to read auguries, to heal the sick, to avert or to cause evil. These people are of two kinds, the *Ajwogo*—literally, the 'man of God'—and the *Jal yath*, the 'medicine man'. The ajwogo deals in white magic, that is, his works
756 are, or are supposed to be, beneficial to the community or
755 the individual on behalf of whom his services are solicited. For a fee of a sheep or a goat or a cow, according to his rapacity and the circumstances of his client, he will do his best to cure or to kill a sick person that he has been called in to attend. For he will cheerfully administer a potion concocted of ingredients the potentialities of which, either for good or ill, he hasn't the slightest idea; will indulge in
[757] blood-letting to an extent that would make an eighteenth-century leech blench with horror; and is not above performing a surgical operation, despite his complete ignorance of anatomy and surgery, with a rusty piece of iron, or a spear head or some other such Shilluk equivalent of the scalpel and lancet. At Detwok a lovely, high-spirited cheerful girl was reduced to a physical wreck after her ordeal at the hands of one of these wretches. She became ill and was attended by the Sisters who thought that she should go to hospital. Her pagan parents refused to allow this and instead called

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

and that one of the tins containing ninety piastres (about 18*s*.) had been stolen. The District Chief was called and held solemn court on the verandah of the house. He, however, could not discover the thief and therefore gave judgment that the owner of the box was responsible for the safety of the money entrusted to him and that he was to refund the missing money and to be held in custody until he did so. This seemed rather unfair on Henry, the owner of the box, since he had gained nothing from acting as banker to the rest, yet unless the thief was found there was nothing that we could do about the matter and it seemed to be closed. Two days later we were surprised to learn that one of the boys had owned up to the theft and had refunded the money. We were pleased, too, because we thought that although the boy had acted meanly in stealing his companion's savings, at least he had been man enough to come forward to save Henry from having to pay the penalty for the theft. We were speedily disillusioned as to his motive for confessing; the other boys knew perfectly well that Henry was innocent of taking the money, and they had a very strong idea who had. Accordingly they subscribed to buy a sheep which was given to the local witch doctor as a fee for finding the thief. The jal yath let it be known that he would sacrifice the sheep at a certain hour, and the moment the animal died so would the culprit; the latter had not the courage to defy the curse but promptly confessed his guilt.

When an animal is slain in sacrifice, great importance is attached to the position in which it falls. If the animal is a bull, it is not usually slain outright, but wounded by a spear thrust and allowed free. If it should wander towards the river or towards the shrine before it dies, that is taken as a sign that the sacrifice is acceptable to Nyikang. So, too, is it taken as a good omen if the beast in collapsing falls on its left side; if it should fall on its right side then the portents are unfavourable, and should it fall neither to right nor left but simply crumple up and fall forward with forefeet doubled beneath it, that would presage some terrible disaster. The actual spearing of the victim is generally done by

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

a Bareth of the shrine before which the sacrifice is made. 782 ●
The king or chief who is present and who dedicates the 787
offering stands by and leads public prayer to Nyikang for 825
the blessing sought. The meat of the sacrifice is eaten by all [262]
present with special perquisites for the Bareth guardian of [793]
the shrine. Care is taken when cutting up the meat not to
break any bones. These are collected and thrown into the
Nile. The horns are stuck in the ground in front of the shrine, [237]
and the skin, scraped and cleaned, remains in the shrine as
a mat for the spirit that dwells therein.

When the new corn is cut, tithes are given to Nyikang. 243
Part of these belong to the Bareth and the remainder is 782
ground into flour and made into a thin porridge which is
poured on to the ground in front of and inside the shrine as
a libation to the residing spirit.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

766 The final ceremonies take place after an interval of a month or two. Cattle, varying in number according to the [782] eminence and wealth of the dead man's family, are driven in for sacrifice and distribution, after being slaughtered, among the participants. The men of the district march in, [535] village by village, and perform the funeral dance, first encircling the village on the outside, then saluting the tomb of the deceased; they advance, clashing spear on shield, to kneel on one knee before the grave, then retire and finally encircle the village, this time on the inside, before giving place to the next company. The whole performance is accompanied by the thudding of the drums and the chanting of [533] the praises of Nyikang and the dead prince. This dance concludes all public remembrance of the dead man. No record is made or kept of the day or month of his death and so nothing in the nature of an anniversary ceremony takes place. The hut under which he is buried is allowed to fall into ruins and [778] thus forms a tumulus over the grave. The place is then made tidy and a reed or thorn fence erected around it to preserve it from profane use.

The household utensils of the dead man are either burned or buried on the day of the funeral, but the rest of 768 his property, including his wives—for they are reckoned as 428 his chattels for which he paid so many head of cattle—is inherited by his relatives according to the directions given by the deceased. If he left no instructions for the dividing of his goods everything belongs to his eldest son, but he is expected to give a share to his brothers and his father's principal male relatives, brothers and half-brothers. The dead man's spears, his canoe and the necklace of large white beads, a token of his dignity, belong to the eldest son absolutely.

764 The funeral of a common Colo and the consequent cere- [565] monies differ in some respects from those of a Nyireth. The body is washed and shaved and adorned with beads, but since no commoner is allowed to wear a leopard skin, the skin of a serval cat is fastened round the loins. If the dead

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

person is a woman or a girl, a skirt is substituted for the skin, and for the girl some strings of yellow beads are added. If the family can afford it, it will buy a couple of yards of white cotton cloth to serve as a winding sheet and a cow skin is bound round this. The grave of a commoner is not dug in the hut itself but outside, near the compound. It is put near the surrounding reed fence, in a place where passers-by will not walk over it. As for a chief, the grave is excavated to a depth of about six feet but it is not nearly so wide, since the body is not buried lying on a bier, but is placed on the bare earth. The niche or alcove is cut out of the side, however, and a hen is placed under the head. During the funeral the mourners wail in the customary manner, and this is the signal for the warriors, who hitherto have been out of sight in the cattle byre, to charge forward, armed as usual with spears and shields, to salute their dead comrade. The grave is mudded over on the fourth day with the customary beer drinking and libation over the grave, and the relatives abstain for a while from dancing and the use of personal adornments.

The mourning is not really completed, however, until the deceased person has been commemorated at a funeral dance. This is a strict obligation upon the relatives, even though it may be a year or more before it is fulfilled. Since the commoner is not sufficiently important or wealthy to be given a dance all to himself, funeral dances are held periodically in the principal villages. The district turns up in force for these communal 'All Souls' days, for besides the attraction of the dance—and any Shilluk will cheerfully walk miles just for the pleasure of a dance—there is also the extra treat of a share in the meat when the affair is over. Everybody who is commemorating his dead must give an offering, a bull if the deceased is a man or a woman, a sheep if a child. The dance follows the pattern of the more important funeral dances. There is no tomb, however, so the drums mounted in forked sticks are made the focus of attention. The warriors, armed with spear and shield, make the customary encirclement of the village and then advance to the drums, chanting their